adventure

— where actions speak louder than words —

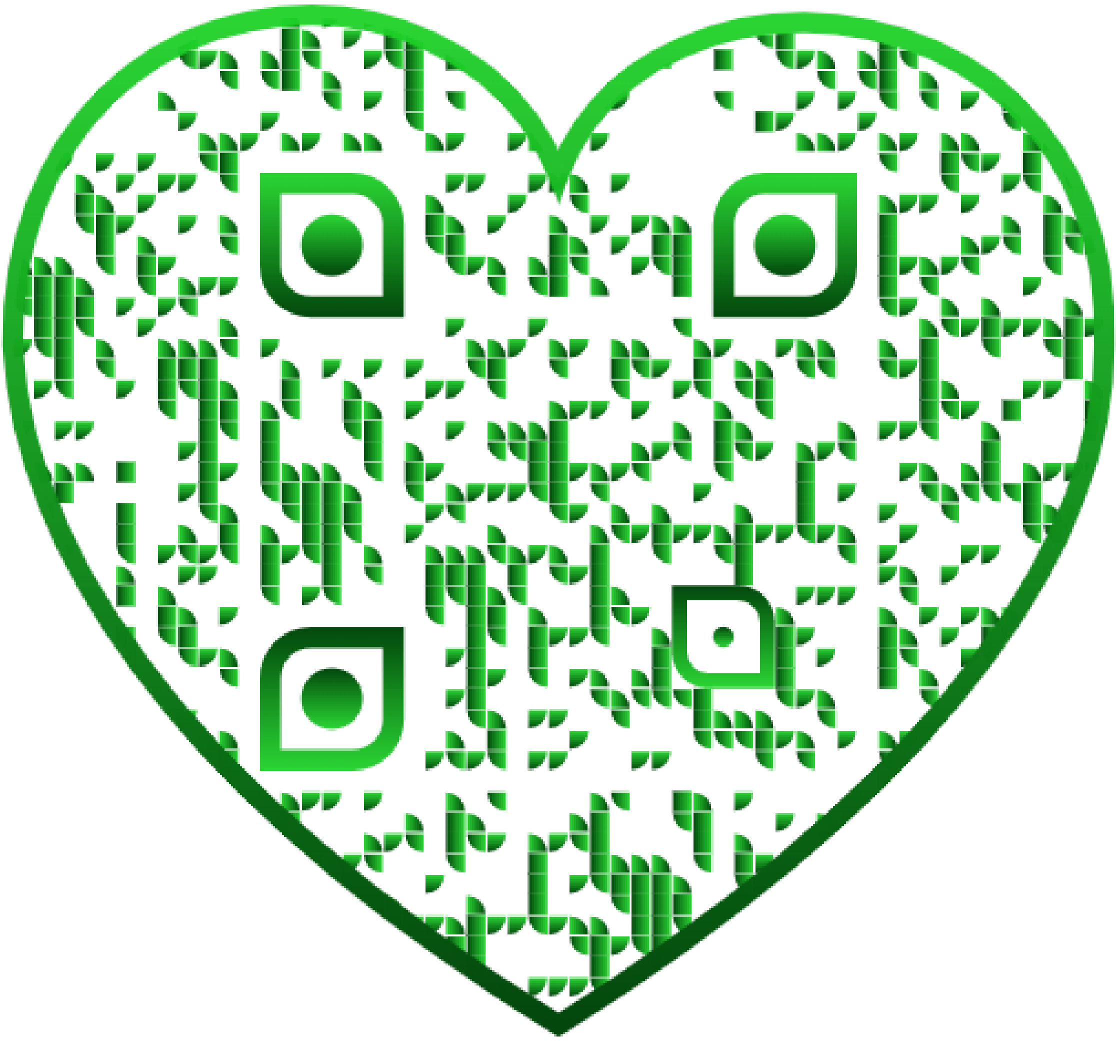
FOR EVERY
MAGAZINE
PURCHASED
WE WILL PLANT
ONE TREE

WHAKATŌ RĀKAU KOTAHI
PLANT
ONE
TREE
ADVENTURE MAGAZINE

WINTER

ISSUE 250
Jun/Jul 2025
NZ $16.90 incl. GST

9 415820 000153 12



YETI
BUILT FOR THE WILD.
2250 ULTRA CENTRECAB

AU.YETI.COM / NZ.YETI.COM

TRADE
TARRIFS

Collaboration, not confrontation

There's a storm building on the horizon, and it's got nothing to do with the weather. It's being whipped up in boardrooms and media bunkers, behind closed political doors and out in the open with the social media megaphone. The name stamped across the face of the storm is Donald Trump. Despite being mocked by every keyboard warrior online, it's not to be taken lightly. Like it or not, if his world of tariffs, protectionism, and nationalist economics gains traction again, the impact on the global adventure scene will be more than just turbulence; it'll be a complete reset.

This isn't about politics, this is not about democrats and republicans, it's not about the far right and centre left, it's about gear, freedom, and the raw logistics of the lifestyle we live and breathe. Tariffs might sound abstract, just tax tweaks, business bullshit and trade war chatter. Still, for those of us who move through alpine backcountry, tropical waters, isolated landscapes and dense bush trails, these policies can strangle the very supply lines we rely on.

Take a closer look at your gear list. With new tariffs hitting Chinese manufacturing, the cost of that ultralight tent has climbed by 20%. Wetsuits made in Taiwan? Now twice the price. And it's not just tents and neoprene—bike parts, GPS units, paragliders, and the technical essentials we rely on are all feeling the squeeze. For the everyday adventurer, that means being ready to pay more, hold off, or find ways to stretch the gear you've already got.

Then there's travel. The global adventure community is a web of operators, guides, adventurers, photographers, and brands all crossing borders. Nationalism threatens that flow. If Trump-style tariffs hit airlines or fuel, international fares climb. If diplomatic friction restricts visas, that dream trip to Peru, Nepal, or Mongolia becomes bureaucratic dust.

Adventure is a global conversation. It relies on collaboration, not confrontation. Tariff wars fracture that, even the rumour of them is enough to tip the scales of common sense. They isolate, divide, and punish industries that depend on open exchange. And make no mistake, adventure tourism is an industry. It employs millions, supports fragile economies, and encourages people to give a damn about the places they explore. When you cut it off at the knees, it's not just a business hit—it's a cultural blackout.

So don't shrug off the political circus. Pay attention. Because if Trump's world view is allowed to harden into reality, it's not just the headlines that change. It's your next expedition, your next escape, and maybe the future of adventure itself.

Steve Dickinson / Editor

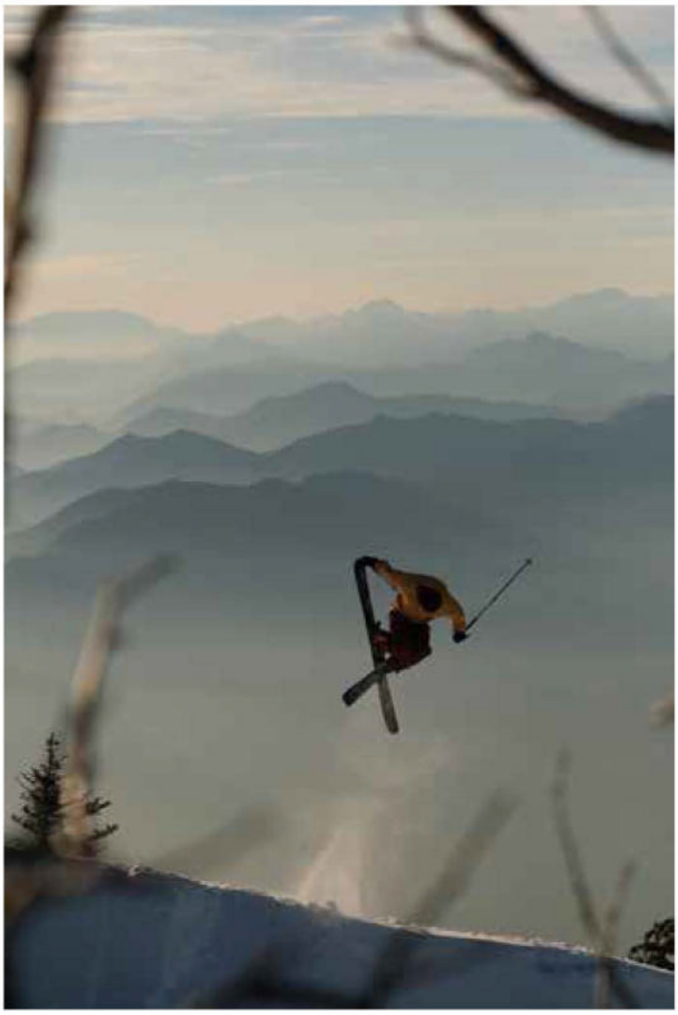
theChiller

NZ's #1 Non-Alcoholic Drink Specialist

0% wines, beers and spirits, delivered to your door.
Free delivery options, NZ-wide.

www.thechiller.co.nz

Use ADVENTURE15 for 15% off your first order



BEHIND THE COVER:

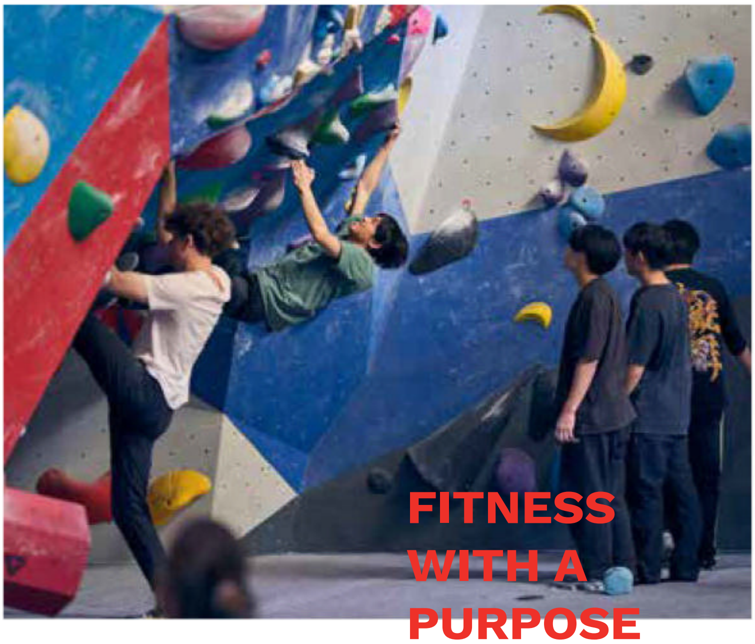
About the shot: My homies and I went on a road trip through Italy, just before the pandemic hit Europe really hard. We didn't have an exact idea of where we were gonna go. The only plan was to find some good ski tours with decent snow, which was pretty hard, 'cause there was basically no snow anywhere in Italy. We didn't even plan to go to this spot, it just kind of happened. After seeing some snow on the mountains while driving on the motorway, we decided to give it a try. We knew the snow was pretty shitty from the previous spot we had been at, so we went to Lago di Garda, had some damn good Italian pizza for dinner and then drove up the mountain, where we spent the night. The weather was perfect the next day, we ski toured up the mountain, had lunch and found a good spot. We built the spot and Chris went for a few hits to figure everything out, but by the time we wanted to start shooting, the air had gotten real hazy and you couldn't see the lake anymore. So the idea of getting the lake in the background of the shot was busted and I had to rearrange and try something different. But everything turned out pretty good, 'cause the hazy sky made these beautiful layers and we got this shot.
Red Bull Illume photographer Lukas Cairns
Athlete: Christoph Kaar, Location: Monte Baldo, Lago di Garda, Italy
@adventuremagazine

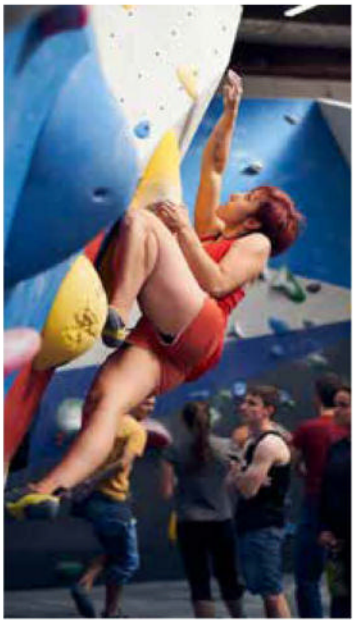
EDITOR & ADVERTISING MANAGER
Steve Dickinson
Mob: 027 577 5014
steve@pacificmedia.co.nz
ART DIRECTOR
Lynne Dickinson
design@pacificmedia.co.nz
SUBSCRIPTION ENQUIRIES
subscribe at www.pacificmedia-shop.co.nz
PUBLISHERS
Pacific Media Ltd,
11a Swann Beach Road
Stanmore Bay, Whangaparaoa, 0942, NZ

OTHER PUBLICATIONS (HARDCOPY AND ONLINE)
www.adventuremagazine.co.nz
www.adventuretraveller.co.nz
www.adventurejobs.co.nz
www.skiandsnow.co.nz
@adventuremagazine
@adventurefishingnz
@ski_snow_magazine
@adventuretravellermag
@AdventureGearGuides
@AdventureVanLife
DISTRIBUTION
ARE, Ph (09) 979 3000
advertising rates, demographic and stats available on request

Media Kits and Statistics are available at any time upon request. Submissions are always wanted, also letters/emails to the editor are always welcome and we are open to advice, critique and invitations - send to Steve@pacificmedia.co.nz

All work published may be used on our website. Material in this publication may not be reproduced without permission. While the publishers have taken all reasonable precautions and made all reasonable effort to ensure the accuracy of material in this publication, it is a condition of purchase of this magazine that the publisher does not assume any responsibility or liability for loss or damage which may result from any inaccuracy or omission in this publication, or from the use of information contained herein and the publishers make no warranties, expressed or implied, with respect to any of the material contained herein.





NR

NORTHERN ROCKS.

Auckland's premier bouldering facility offers an exceptional bouldering experience with exciting routes, great community, fitness and yoga facilities. Girls & women climbing programs, after school classes & holiday programs.

www.northernrocks.co.nz

FITNESS WITH A PURPOSE

There is mounting research to support what climbers have known for years, that bouldering is an effective way of improving fitness, self-confidence and developing social and cognitive skills.

Northern Rocks has designed challenges for people of all abilities and backgrounds, from first timers out to have a bit of fun, to World Cup competitors aiming for the Olympics.

@northernrocks.climbing

- Free 2 weeks for first time climbers
- Boulder classes for all ages & abilities
- Girls & women specific classes
- After school & holiday programs
- Adult, youth & student memberships
- Student Mondays $18 entry all day

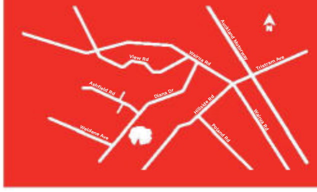
What are you waiting for...
Contact us for further information.

NR

P: 09 278 2363
E: info@northernrocks.co.nz

111 Diana Drive, Glenfield, Auckland

Monday to Friday 10am–10pm
Saturday/Sunday 8am–8pm



Rab

Crafted for the depths of winter.

Glaceon Pro Jacket

Frozen trails, wind-battered summits, winter ascents. Combat the cold on any mountain objective with the exceptionally light and warm Glaceon Pro down jacket.

Available now from Rab specialist stores throughout NZ.

Hunting And Fishing New Zealand stores nationwide. Auckland: Living Simply, Waikato: Trek N Travel, Equip Outdoors, Tauranga: Hamills, Taupo: Pack N Pedal, Wellington: Dwights Outdoors, Motueka: Coppins Outdoors, Nelson: PackGearGo, MD Outdoors, Kaikoura: Coastal Sports, Christchurch: Complete Outdoors, Methven: Alpine Sports, Greymouth: Colls Sports, Hokitika: Wild Outdoorsman, Wanaka: MT Outdoors, Queenstown: Small Planet, Invercargill: Southern Adventure.
Online: huntingandfishing.co.nz, dwights.co.nz, outdooraction.co.nz, mtoutdoors.co.nz, smallplanetsports.com, equipoutdoors.co.nz, gearshop.co.nz, outfittersstore.nz

Distributed by Outfitters 0800 021732 www.outfitters.co.nz

JETPARK
HOTELS

HERE FOR EVERY MOMENT OF YOUR JOURNEY

Whether you're beginning an adventure or coming home, JetPark Auckland is proud to be part of your journey. Enjoy our Park, Stay, Fly package, free non-stop shuttle to and from Auckland Airport, and convenient on-site rental car options to explore NZ your way!

Book Now: 0800 538 466
www.jetpark.co.nz

DRY JULY FOR CANCER SUPPORT

THERE'S NOTHING MORE SOBERING THAN CANCER:

Do Dry July and show up for the people you love: Registrations for 2025 are now open

Every 22 minutes, another New Zealander hears the devastating news they have cancer. In July alone, more than 2,200 Kiwis will be diagnosed. That's why we Dry July. Cancer support services help people navigate their life after a diagnosis. To run, these services rely on public donations.

Dry July 2025 is officially open for registrations and New Zealanders are being urged to sign up, go alcohol-free for a month and raise funds to provide non-medical support for the people close to them, fighting cancer. This year's message from Dry July is that there is nothing more powerful than showing up for others: think about your own personal connection to cancer and register for them.

People can participate in Dry July as individuals or as a workplace team and seek sponsorship. Dry July raised more than $900,000 last year, and since it launched in New Zealand in 2012, more than 61,000 people have taken part, raising more than $10 million to support cancer patients, their whānau and carers.

Giving up alcohol is a small sacrifice for someone facing cancer. Act for your health, and theirs. Do it for your dad, your sister, your best mate, your colleague. Do it for someone you love.Take up the challenge and Go Dry this July. Register today **www.dryjuly.co.nz**

TheChiller

'We're excited to be entering our third year as an official partner of Dry July to help raise vital funds for Kiwis affected by cancer.

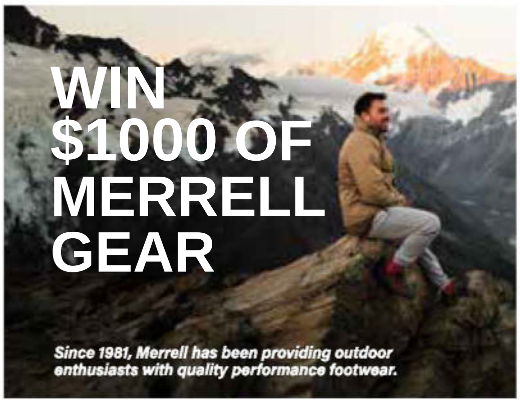
At The Chiller, we're here to support participants through their dry month challenge with great non-alcoholic drinks and deals throughout the month, plus during July, we're donating $1 from every order to Dry July NZ Trust. We're also helping stock brand-new Panasonic fridges with our top hand-picked, non-alcoholic beverages for two lucky fundraisers who raise $30 or more!

Dry July is also a great opportunity to reset your drinking habits and even rethink how you drink long term. One of the easiest ways to get started is simply to switch your usual for the non-alcoholic version, enjoying the same flavours and rituals you love. Whether it be a G&T using Tanqueray 0%, a smooth, rich Guinness 0% or a bold red wine, our extensive range has something for everyone.

We encourage you to sign up now. Make the commitment, for your health - and theirs." *Amanda Boock, Founder of The Chiller*
www.thechiller.co.nz

THE PATHFINDER

THE PATHFINDER HEMP-BASED NON-ALCOHOLIC SPIRIT
RRP: $79.99
Smells like a spirit. Tastes like a spirit. Mixes like a spirit. <0.5% ABV. Enjoy the thrill of throwing back a dram with this hemp-based non-alcoholic spirit with pioneering complexity and character.
www.thechiller.co.nz


WIN $1000 OF MERRELL GEAR
Since 1981, Merrell has been providing outdoor enthusiasts with quality performance footwear.

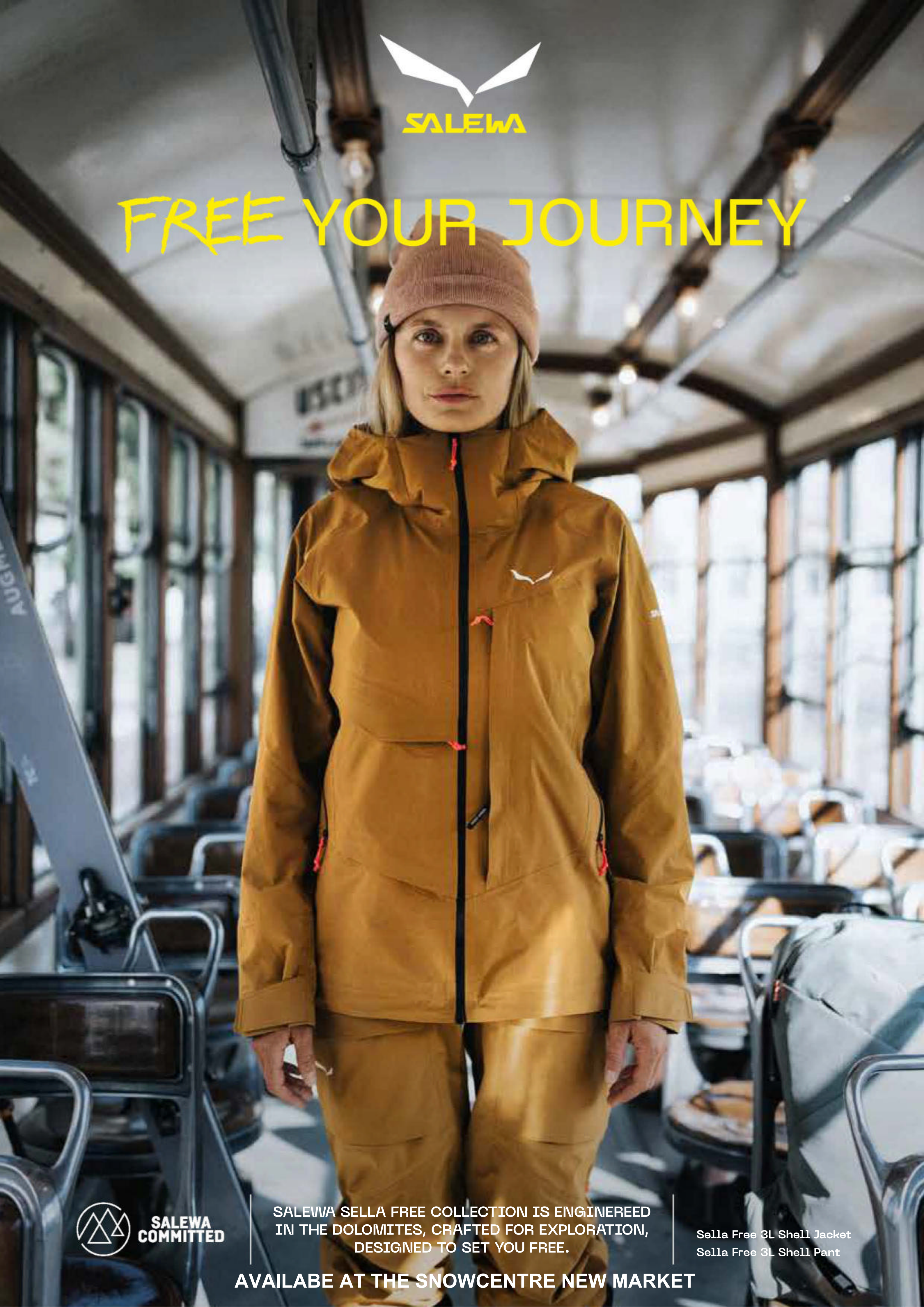
MERRELL COMPETITION WINNER

Thanks to everyone who entered the Merrell competition that we ran in the last issue of Adventure.

Congratulations to Grant Allan, the winner of $1000 worth of Merrell gear!

BRINGING FEATURES TO LIFE

If you come across this TV logo or headphones in the digital issue, simply click on it to access the corresponding YouTube, video link or podcast, bringing the feature to life.


SALEWA
FREE YOUR JOURNEY
SALEWA COMMITTED

SALEWA SELLA FREE COLLECTION IS ENGINEREED IN THE DOLOMITES, CRAFTED FOR EXPLORATION, DESIGNED TO SET YOU FREE.

Sella Free 3L Shell Jacket
Sella Free 3L Shell Pant

AVAILABE AT THE SNOWCENTRE NEW MARKET

EQUIP
OUTDOORS
EQUIP
YOURSELF!

Low Prices Everyday

Free NZ Shipping on orders over $150 for members

Members Earn Equip+ Loyalty Points

shop online or instore

equipoutdoors.co.nz

62 Killarney Road,
Frankton, Hamilton,
New Zealand
P: 0800 22 67 68
E: sales@equipoutdoors.co.nz

equipOUTDOORS

PLANT
ONE
TREE
ADVENTURE MAGAZINE

SUBSCRIBE

AND WE'LL PLANT A TREE

READ – EXPLORE – GROW:

At Adventure Magazine, sustainability isn't a buzzword—it's a commitment. We've chosen FSC® Certified paper and vegetable-based inks, prioritising the planet over profit and are now planting a tree with every subscription .

Here's why it matters:
Our FSC™ paper is sourced from responsibly managed forests, meeting stringent standards set by the Forest Stewardship Council. This means every sheet supports sustainable forestry, protects biodiversity, and respects the rights of indigenous communities. Certified under the ISO14001 Environmental Management System, our paper ensures minimal environmental impact and can even be produced carbon-neutral.

But it's not just about trees—it's about the bigger picture. FSC™ certification guarantees a strict "chain of custody" from forest to print. This transparent process ensures every step adheres to environmental and social responsibility, giving readers and advertisers peace of mind that they support a greener future.

When it comes to inks, we go further. Our Toka H-UV inks are free from mineral oils and volatile organic compounds (VOCs), unlike conventional inks that can contain up to 80% hydrocarbons. Manufactured under exacting environmental standards, these inks create an award winning publication yet still sustainable without harming the planet.

Choosing FSC™ paper and eco-friendly inks means we can reduce our environmental footprint while delivering the premium quality you expect. It's a bold move in an industry often driven by cost-cutting, but it aligns with our ethos: Read – Explore – Grow.
By supporting Adventure Magazine, you're joining us in protecting the natural world that inspires every adventure. Together, we can turn the page to a greener future.

But let's take this step to a better future –

With every subscription sold, we will plant a native tree in Aotearoa.
That's right—your magazine doesn't just inform and inspire; it actively restores and protects our natural world. Each tree supports biodiversity, improves air quality, and contributes to the vibrant, resilient landscapes that make New Zealand so extraordinary.

When you pick up Adventure Magazine, you're not just holding a publication – you're part of a movement.

FSC
www.fsc.org
MIX
Paper | Supporting responsible forestry
FSC® C157047

A movement to Read – Explore – Grow. A movement that supports sustainable practices, champions our environment and ensures the adventures we cherish will be here for generations to come.

Turn the page with us. Together, we can explore the world while helping to sustain its future—one tree, one issue, one adventure at a time.

Scan Me

Scan the code to subscribe or go to www.pacificmedia-shop.co.nz/collections/subscriptions

PURSUIT PLUS+
SELF INFLATING MAT

Pursuit Plus is a self inflating performance sleeping mat that combines cutting-edge materials for a lightweight design, offering both comfort and ease of use. Perfect for those who tread lightly on the environment.

R-value 4.2
ASTM F3340-22

Thickness
7.5cm | 3in

Comfort
WHEREVER
YOU ROAM
SEATOSUMMIT

Find a Stockist
southernapproach.co.nz

“THE ANNOUNCEMENT” PODCAST SERIES:

AN ADVENTURE INTO PURPOSE, POWER, AND PLANET

Words by Matt Barr

In a world hooked on profit margins and shareholder returns, one man threw out the rulebook and rewrote the story.

In September 2022, Yvon Chouinard, dirtbag climber turned reluctant billionaire, did something no business tycoon had ever done. He gave it all away. Every dollar, every share of Patagonia. Not to a trust fund or a shell company. But to a single, radical idea: “Earth is our only shareholder.”

But what does that actually mean? Why would someone who built a global empire step aside just as it reached its peak? What about the critics? The sceptics? The capitalist machine that chews up good intentions for breakfast?

This is "The Announcement", a three-part podcast documentary from Looking Sideways, hosted by Matt Barr. It’s not just a tale about a company, or even the man behind it. It’s a deep expedition into legacy, purpose, and whether it’s really possible to do business differently in the age of ecological collapse.

It explores the tension between capitalism and conservation, how storytelling shapes movements, and why moments of bold symbolism—like this one—might just shift the compass of history.

Because in the fight for the planet, the biggest leaps sometimes start with a single, daring step into the unknown.
This one’s not just a podcast. It’s a challenge to everything we thought we knew about business, wealth, and the true cost of staying the same.

We asked Matt Barr a few hard questions about the podcast - there are links at the end of the editorial where you can hear the podcasts in full.

In simply terms what was your main goal in producing these podcasts? When Patagonia announced their decision to ‘make earth their only shareholder’ back in September 2022 it garnered a huge amount of interest in the outdoor, action sports, business and climate activism worlds. I was invited to that initial town hall they held at which they explained the thinking behind the decision and I remember thinking at the time that it was a really important, significant decision.

Later, as the online reaction unfolded, it quite quickly devolved into the usual binary online debate - you were either for the move, because you buy into this idea of Yvon Chouinard as a visionary genius, or you were against the move because you thought it must clearly be some kind of tax dodge.

Whereas it seemed quite obvious to me there must be much more to it than that, which is why I decided to start looking into it.

Patagonia's decision to "give away the company" is unprecedented—personally, what was your initial reaction when you heard about it? And was that the seed for the podcast? Well, that’s one of the things I quickly learned: I don’t actually think it is unprecedented, although obviously in the outdoor world it’s a very progressive act. But in the wider worlds of business and philanthropy, it’s actually quite a familiar approach, both in concept and in structure.

That’s why I was interested in speaking to Marcus Lux from the Robert Bosch Foundation, for example. Or Audette Exel, who runs the Adara Group, which is structured in a way that is very reminiscent of the new tripartite approach that is reality of the new Patagonia arrangement, where a commercial business funds a none-profit.

In structure as well, the Patagonia move made very canny use of something called a 501(c) (4) tax code which other organisations, individuals have used to further their own political and social democratic ends: although the way the company used in this context was pretty unprecedented, as I explored in the second episode of the series.

The ‘seed’ for the podcast was realising that this topic would be a way in to some other really important themes such as the unaccountable influence of billionaires, modern corporate philanthropy, and the whole conversation round the way ‘business’ can be involved in the ‘fight’ against climate change. Patagonia were also really forthright in this idea that their announcement was ‘retooling’ capitalism in some fundamental way, which also seemed really worth exploring.

I have heard it said that the giving away of the company was either the most benevolent act in modern business or the best PR stunt ever, how do you respond to that? I think it’s a bit of both. There’s no doubt that Patagonia are remarkably effective PR storytellers, and you can see that in the way they approached this conversation. ‘Earth is our only shareholder’ is just a really easy concept to understand and they communicated it brilliantly. But I think there’s much more going on here than just a ‘benevolent’ act of business philanthropy, as important as that is.

Looking into it, it became clear that for the Chouinard family and the company in general the issue of legacy was equally important, how do we ensure the leadership that is epitomised by Yvon continues after his death? This was clearly a huge factor in the company’s decision making, and one of the reasons that they established the Patagonia Purpose Trust, for example, as an integral part of this move.

Yvon has been a reluctant businessman from the start, do you think that attitude shapes Patagonia today? Well, I think that’s an example of Patagonia’s PR genius in action tbh.

Can you ‘accidentally’ become a billionaire? Can you amass that type of fortune without participating in extractive practises? After all, like all fashion brands, Patagonia are routinely criticised for the factories they use, for the working conditions of their workers, for the materials they use, and so on. They also just made a large number of people redundant. They’re a business like any other, and a ruthlessly successful one.

At this stage, in the current climate, where we have some pretty high profile billionaires wreaking havoc, these are questions that are at least worth looking squarely in the face. I’m not sure how useful this archetype of the fluffy billionaire, or ‘reluctant businessman’, really is.

> "This ‘here’s a problem - solve it’ seems to be a key part of the way Chouinard leads, and certainly one reason why he seems to inspire such fervent veneration among his acolytes. "

How have listeners responded to The Announcement and its content? The response has been beyond anything I expected to be honest. People have responded incredibly positively to the series, and it continues to gain listeners and press coverage around the world, which is really gratifying. Especially as, let’s face it, the series is a very in-depth and uncompromising looks at the type of themes that don’t really get much coverage in the outdoor world.

But that’s another reason why I wanted to make the podcast, and one reason I started my Looking Sideways series generally. Not to sound like an old man ailing against clouds, but there’s just very little actual journalism around these days, so I think listeners have responded to that really positively.

One interesting thing I have noticed is that even though the main message of the series is really just ‘this is more complicated than it looks - like life’, and I tried to be scrupulously even-handed throughout the series, and present the many different takes and perspectives as fairly as possible, it’s actually really difficult for people to change their minds, especially if their position is particularly entrenched.

I had a surprising number of messages and comments from people saying ‘I’ve listened to the entire series twice now, and I still just think he’s a legend’. Or ‘I think you let him off too lightly - it’s blatantly a tax dodge’.

Was there a ‘wow’ moment in the creation of the podcast? On a selfish note, one of the main reasons I wanted to make this series was to challenge myself creatively. So in that sense the entire process was one long wow moment, because it was hard. I wrote, produced, researched, presented and am now marketing the thing myself. So to finish it and see it find an audience is really rewarding.

Was there any part of Yvon’s decision-making process that really stuck with you? I think one of the most interesting details, and something listeners seems to have found surprising, is that he really didn’t seem to have too much to do with working out the details of the eventual arrangement. From what I could discern, he seemed to set his executive team a ‘problem to solve’, in the words of Patagonia Inc’s President Jenna Johnson in episode 1, and then left it up to a group of senior leaders to actually come up with the solution.

This ‘here’s a problem - solve it’ seems to be a key part of the way Chouinard leads, and certainly one reason why he seems to inspire such fervent veneration among his acolytes.

He’s spent his life redefining what business can be—what do you think his biggest legacy will be? One of the most interesting conversations I had while making the series was with Val Franco, and original Patagonia employee who these days runs the company’s official archive. Val was a legend, and knows as much about the company as anybody currently living. And the way Val tells it, Patagonia came fairly late to this notion of corporate activism that they are now so synonymous with.

Which I think is super interesting, and comes back to this idea of Chouinard’s legacy, which is that he has for better or worse defined the idea of what ‘responsible’ business looks like in the outdoor industry, much of which he - and by extension - his company - have been working out as he went along.

After making this podcast, did it change how you personally see the intersection of business and environmentalism? I think one of my own conclusions while making the series is that there is, to put it politely, a lot of very ineffective ‘activism’ carried out in the outdoor industry in the name of sustainability and climate activism. My day job when I’m not making podcasts is running an outdoor marketing agency called All Conditions Media, and in that work I speak to a lot of startups. And without doubt the main thing I hear from new brands is ‘we want to be the new Patagonia’ or ‘we want to be the Patagonia of X’.

Yet the thing about Patagonia is that they haven’t followed or copied anybody else. They have, pretty consistently, asked themselves a fundamental question - what actions should I take to have a real impact on the issues I purport to care about?’ Over the years this has led them to do many industry-leading initiatives - establish 1 Percent for the Planet, become one of the first B Corps, and so and so forth.

And now it has led them to create a none-profit through which they channel a large percentage of their profits, which in the outdoor industry is another very progressive act. So for me this is the main ‘lesson’ of what Patagonia did and the series itself - more companies need to ask themselves a similarly forthright question, and be prepared for an uncomfortable action. Rather than blindly follow the B Corps path, attend an expensive conference where the same speakers speak to the same echo chambers, and so on.

In the making of the podcast are there people you would like to thank? I worked really closely with Jo Taylor, who exec produced the series and had much to do with shaping the material into what it became. Ben Townsend, a super talented music producer, helped me produce the series, and wrote and arranged the original score. And Owen Tozer, a designer, artist, film-maker and all round creative genius, came up with the identity for the series and created the short Reels and trailer.,

How do people find the podcast and if people wish to react to it where would you like them to do that? You can find it on the usual platform, or on my website www.wearelookingsideways.com, where you can also leave comments and feedback.

And finally what is next for Matt Barr – whose next on the podcast list? Ha well funnily enough my 250th episode of my ‘regular’ Looking Sideways series is approaching and I’m hoping to interview Sir Chris Bonington for this one. In terms of another series, I’ve begin to think about a new series called The Lift, which uses the ways mountain resorts are mitigating the impact of climate change in the short terms as a way into the way society in general is handling this crucial issue.

For the link to the first episode check out **www.wearelookingsideways.com**

ONE NZ SATELLITE

TXT from way off the BEATEN TRACK

Love camping and tramping? Stay in touch even when you're way, way out in the sticks with One NZ Satellite.

Whether you're day-tripping through reception as up and down as the walk or exploring where other networks don't venture, now you can TXT updates, questions or even ask for help if your time in the great outdoors becomes not-so-great.

One NZ Satellite is included at no extra cost on eligible phones and plans. See one.nz/satellite for more info.

Coverage across NZ

Help when you need it

Works where other networks can't

STARLINK | one.nz

TXT in minutes on eligible phones and plans. TXT only and needs line of sight to sky. Terms, fair use and capacity control applies. See one.nz/satellite

Image by Leslie Hittmeier
Supplied by Natural Selection Tour

CRAIG MURRAY:
KIWI WINS NATURAL SELECTION

In the Tordrillo Mountains, Alaska, Wanaka's Craig Murray has taken out the first-ever Yeti Natural Selection Ski event, winning against one of the toughest fields ever assembled for the event.

"This has been unreal," Murray said. "Just being here in the Tordrillo's was next-level. To make the final and win it… I'm still trying to process it"
Natural; Selection is an invite-only event, started by snowboard legend Travis Rice which pulls together some of the world's best freeriders and park skiers. The event threw the participants at the heavy, technical face known as 'Priority 1'. The knockout format left no margin for error. Round after round, Murray delivered exactly what he's known for; fast, fluid lines with a clean, powerful style.

In the final, he laid down a run that earned him an 85 from the judges. Blasting through the terrain at pace, Murray stitched together a full line of 360s and flips, keeping speed and control where most would have blown apart.

Sam Kush of Canada pushed hard and finished second, with Italy's Marcus Eder taking third overall based on semi-final scores.

This win cements Murray's place among the top freeride skiers in the world, blending the speed, flow, and technical precision that Natural Selection was built to showcase.

Main image: Craig Murray, Natural Selection Tour - Image by Chad Chomlack

THE SOUTH FACE OF SABRE:

THE BEST CLASSICAL ROCK CLIMBING IN THIS FAIR LAND

Words and images by Derek Cheng

The hard climbing was behind us. With three pitches to the summit ridge, I pulled my climbing shoes on but didn't bother with the laces.

One steeper but supposedly easy section remained on the Fisher-McLeod, a classic route on the even-more classic south face of Sabre, in northern Fiordland. But the overlap, I belatedly realised, has minimal footholds. This is smooth terrain where you really need to push your sticky-rubber shoes into the rock to maximise friction.

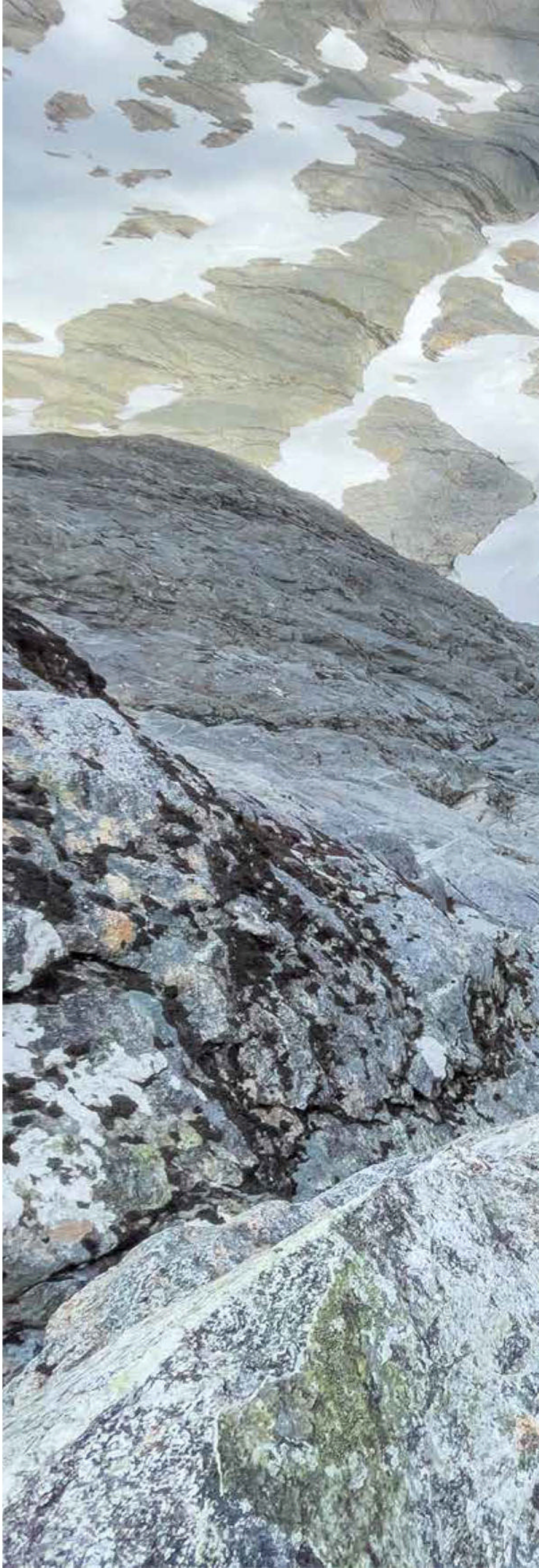
As I traversed across to a prow leading through the overhang, the panic-alarm in my head shuddered to life as my feet started slipping. I pushed them harder into the rock, but this only lifted my heels more, making my connection to the rock increasingly tenuous.

My last piece of protection was several metres below me. A fall here would be horrific. A big hold on the prow was almost within reach. Do I lunge for it?

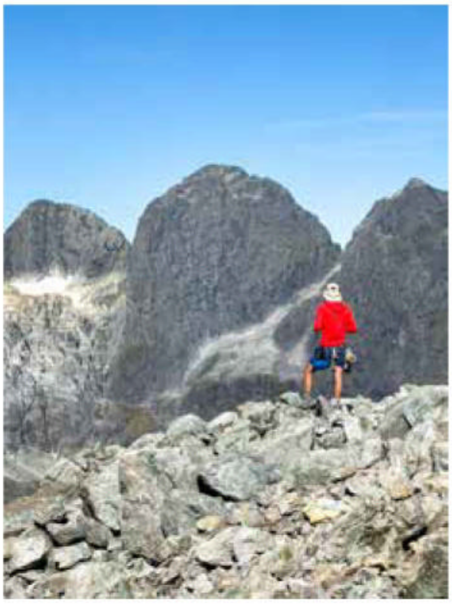
***

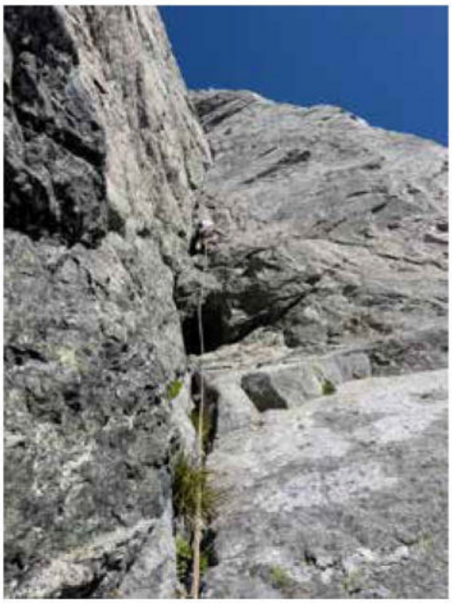
"New Zealand's best rockclimbing peak," is how climbing legend Murray Jones described Sabre, after pioneering several routes to the summit. "Its history is perhaps in character, given that the difficulties faced by the early explorers still exist today: remote location, heavy rainfall, difficult access down steep tussock slopes and sheer rock walls."

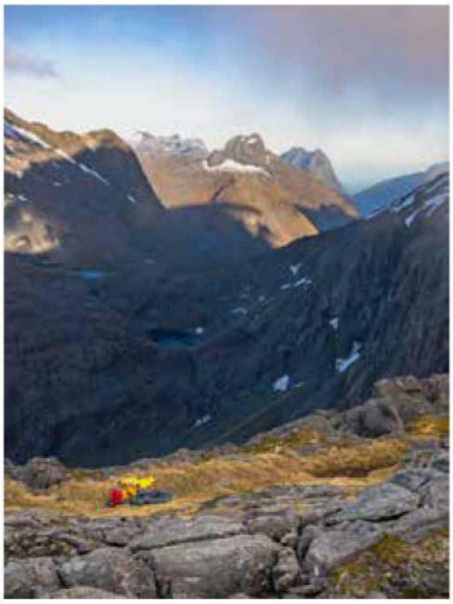
The sheerness perhaps explains why Sabre took longer to conquer than more remote peaks in the Darrans range; climbing it requires more than simply walking up a low-angle slope. Indeed, it was the use of rubber gym shoes instead of nailed mountaineering boots that enabled the first ascent, in 1954, via the East Ridge, which is today the standard way down.



Rachel Knott reaches high on the Fisher-McLeod, on the south face of Sabre, high above Lake Mariana


Sabre, flanked by Adelaide Peak (left) and Marian Peak (right)


Nick Flyvbjerg on the Jones-Chouinard, a three-pitch climb on the northeast face of Sabre


Rachel Knott taking in a view of Mitre Peak as she beds down in our bivvy spot at the Barrier-Crosscut col

Bryce Wood, Dal Ryan and Bill Gordon had gained the ridge from the col between Sabre and Adelaide Peak. "All were conscious of a slight hollowness within and a clamminess of the hands, nor were feelings assuaged by several abortive attempts up chutes and ribs," wrote Wood in the 1955 NZ Alpine Journal (NZAJ).

Their bid would have failed were it not for a "narrow blade-like ledge" that allowed them to move higher. "We are almost certain that this pitch could not be negotiated in nailed boots, nor perhaps even with conventional rubbers, and were pleased at our decision to use gym-shoes." The rest of the ridge was relatively straight forward, including climbing past a "monstrous gendarme" that, today, climbers look for as a sign they're on the right descent.

It wasn't until 1968 that the peak's most iconic feature - the North Buttress - was tamed, a two-day ascent by Harold Jacobs and Murray Jones that included an excruciating 25 hours with no water. It would have been several hours longer, had they not come across a tongue of ice they could melt in the back of a crack. "My mouth was so dry that I almost choked if I tried to swallow. I thought of Moses tapping the rock and tried just that to alleviate my mental discomfort," wrote Jacobs in the 1969 NZAJ.

Water was doubly necessary given the struggles Jacobs endured on the first day, when he kept falling while trying to follow one of Judges' more heroic and difficult leads. At one point, he implored Jones to pull him up from above, but "the rope had caught around a rock and the pull was indirect. I was dragged sideways and fell off, gasping at the end of the rope like a fish out of water."

A few years later, in 1971, the south face proper succumbed for the first time (it had been climbed previously to gain the East Ridge), again to Murray Jones, this time partnered with Alan Jones. They picked a line up the centre of the face, using some aid near the start of the climb. Murray Jones was suitably impressed: "The south face of Sabre is perhaps the best classical rock climb in this fair land."

***

I can still smell the gunpowder.
My first foray to Sabre took place during my first trip to the Darrans, in 2012, when I climbed the North Buttress Direct. This follows three pitches of steep cracks to a huge ledge, where Jacobs and Jones had spent a thirsty night during the first ascent of the buttress 44 years earlier.

It was a gorgeous, bluebird day with only a single terrifying moment, when I traversed to a ledge that promptly and wholly collapsed. I quickly scrambled higher and watched the massive block of rock disappear into the abyss, smashing into a billion shards below. Two impressions were immediately apparent: the sharp gunpowder smell typical of heavy rock-on-rock friction, and the incredible relief I felt because my belayer, Mike, was above and not below me.

It was another decade before I returned to Sabre, when my friend Nick and I enjoyed a good weather window to do two routes on the northeast face: the TV Route into Sabre Rattling (the former is so named because the first ascent, in 1971, was filmed), and the Jones-Chouinard into the East Ridge. Both were excellent adventures, the former with probably the best rock on the mountain, and the latter with a crack-corner crux that's exciting because, one, it's quite steep, and two, it's quite mossy.

But the south face has always been particularly enticing. Plotting a plan this summer at Homer Hut, the only information I found about the Fisher-McLeod route was a hand-drawn topo.

Getting to the base is far from straight forward. My partner Rachel and I decided to bivvy at the Barrier-Crosscut col, planning to descend into the Marian valley, scramble up to the face, climb to the Sabre summit, and then traverse over Marian and Barrier peaks and back to our bivvy in a day.

It's not uncommon for plans in the mountains to unfold less than smoothly. Morning fog thwarted our pre-dawn start. We'd never done the steep descent into Marian Valley, and full visibility was preferable. It was almost 8am when the fog lifted, prompting Rachel to pack a sleeping bag, given how the delay increased the chances of us not making it back by nightfall.

The second thwarting was, predictably, a complicated descent into the valley. We ended up resorting to building an abseil anchor out of climbing wires - twice - when it got too steep. We later found out about a quartz dike below Crosscut that offers a much easier descent.

The third thwarting was on the 300m of slabs leading to the start of the route. Shenanigans ensued after I started up a steeper step, and turned to Rachel to ask how comfortable she was climbing this ropeless. To make it a bit easier, I then shouldered her pack (I couldn't put it fully on my back as I had a rope over my shoulders) and moved a few metres higher to give her

Three climbers on the northeast face of Sabre on the TV Route, so named because the first ascent was filmed

Nick Flyvbjerg passing the monstrous gendarme on the East Ridge of Sabre

some space, but she wasn't prepared to commit to the moves without a rope. Very reasonable, a fall here would be death.

My next move was tricky, smeary and friction-dependent, and even trickier with the pack on my shoulder. Down-climbing was also tenuous, nor was I on a luxurious ledge where I could easily remove the pack and lower it to her. Finely balanced on smallish footholds, I unshouldered the pack, slowly and gingerly, and held it with one hand while tying a rope end to it with the other. I then lowered it to the luxurious ledge she was standing on.

I then balanced on one foot at a time while I switched my approach shoes for climbing shoes. This made the smeary move much more comfortable. Finally in a nook with a decent stance, I pulled up Rachel's pack with the rope I had lowered to her, and then body-belayed her up with the same rope. It was 1.30pm by the time we arrived at the base of the route, with 500-odd metres of technical climbing between us and the summit. Having a sleeping bag with us now seemed increasingly wise.

John Fisher and Bill McLeod established the climb in 1987, a time when grades were hard-earned and climbing in the mountains was generally much bolder than today. This was immediately apparent on the first pitch, supposedly a grade 17. Some wet, diagonal cracks led to a block so smooth and featureless that it offered nothing for your feet. This meant having to match my feet where my hands were, on top of the block, and then somehow standing up, all while ignoring a huge but completely loose feature next to my hands. The line then traversed left, but required stemming your legs in a way a yoga master would find impressive. Rachel has much shorter legs than me, so as I did the move, I placed a sling at head-height so she could pull on it, if her stemming range came up short. She was, she told me later, very happy for the sling.

The main event was a distinctive 60m corner, but gaining the corner turned out to be the crux: near-vertical climbing on small holds for several metres with scant protection, and a ledge below you to maximise fall damage. This is climbing at its most engaging, committing to moves that might be irreversible. If it's the wrong way, what happens next is probably not worth thinking about. Each delicate move, my heart in my mouth, took me further from my solitary piece of protection. Rachel's heart, too, was apparently in her mouth. As soon as I reached the base of the corner, she yelled up the obvious: "Place more protection!"

The corner itself was fabulous: steep and juggy with good protection, and some loose blocks here and there to make it slightly but not overly terrifying. Topping out the corner was glorious, the turquoise lakes of the Marian Valley far below, the hardest pitches now behind us. I pulled off my climbing shoes to give my feet some relief.

With the pitches ahead only grade (supposedly) 16 or easier, I didn't bother tying the laces after pulling my shoes back on. But regret soon washed over me as I tried to climb the prow through the overlap, my shoes sliding off as the panic-alarm in my head roared to life. I was becoming desperate, a brutal fall snapping at my heels.

An involuntary whimper escaped my mouth as I eyed a spike of rock on the arete. The whimper grew into a growl as I lunged at it, latching it with my left hand, and then scampering above the overlap. I tied my laces as soon as I could, and they stayed laced for the next grade 16 pitch, a right-leaning corner system, as well as for the final blocky pitch to the summit ridge.

It was just before 8pm when Rachel joined me. We took a brief break to don warm clothes before continuing to the summit. A magnificent fireball-sunset, clouds streaming over the summit of neighbouring Marian Peak, accompanied us as we started descending.

With a full moon that night, an attempted traverse back to our bivvy at the Barrier-Crosscut col might have seen us arriving at 3am, if things went smoothly. But with our minds and bodies weary, and armed with a sleeping bag, we abseiled part of the northwest face to a flattish spot to spend the night.

Settling in for the night seemed apt, given all the grand adventures Sabre had hosted over the decades. It also seemed wise to wait for daylight to negotiate the tricky parts of the traverse (which, the following morning, took us over four hours).

Continuing could be seen as unnecessarily more risky, the equivalent of climbing with loose laces.

bivouac/outdoor
COMMITTED TO ADVENTURE
we ARE skiing
Black Diamond
icebreaker
OUTDOOR RESEARCH
OSPREY
patagonia
SCARPA
THE NORTH FACE

Earning your turns; about to ski off Mt Rolleston, Arthur's Pass National Park, New Zealand.

Photo by Tom Hoyle.

For over thirty years Bivouac Outdoor has been proudly 100% New Zealand owned and committed to providing you with the best outdoor clothing and equipment available in the world. Gear to keep you dry, warm and safe either in-bounds, sidecountry or backcountry this season. Ski, board and gear hire plus full workshop and servicing facilities available this season at our Tower Junction (Christchurch) store.

BCT BACKCOUNTRY TRUST
Supporting Aotearoa's Backcountry Heritage

STORES NATIONWIDE
www.bivouac.co.nz

Wilma Jess and Olivia on the Tablelands near Salisbury Lodge

PRECIOUS TIMES IN KAHURANGI NATIONAL PARK:

Words and Images by Eric Skilling and Howick Tramping Club

Kahurangi National Park's natural wonders have featured in blockbuster movies, is home to the world-renowned Heaphy Track and the epic Old Ghost Road Mountain bike trail. Over 5,000 square kilometres of lush forests, spectacular river ravines, and exposed marble mountains make the nearby Abel Tasman Park look like an afterthought at a mere 250 square kilometres. Most adventurers would agree with the literal translation of Kahurangi as "precious" and a "treasured possession." Give it the respect it deserves, and this is a playground for everyone from families on a day trip, mum-and-daughter weekend getaways, thrill-seeking mountain bikers, and intrepid explorers of untracked wilderness.

Within an hour of leaving Flora car park, hikers emerge from a dense red beech and podocarp forest to enjoy expansive views of Tasman Bay, from Nelson to the distant Marlborough Sounds. Then take time to notice the foliage alongside the track merge into airy silver beech forest. Later, step out from the treeline onto exposed rock and 360-degree views. Only gnarly, wind and snow-toughed sub-alpine plants survive up here, before even they mostly disappear as you reach the summit of Mt Arthur, and revel in the achievement.

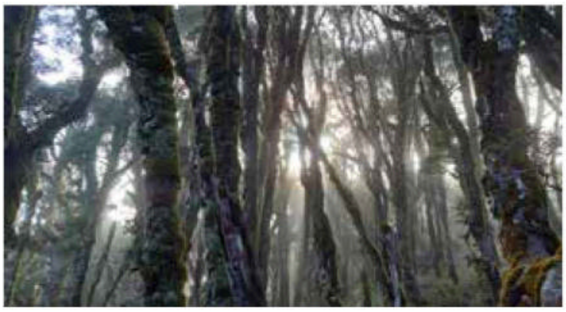
Alternatively, as we did, head northwest from Flora carpark towards Salisbury Lodge Hut. Wide-spaced silver and mountain beech trees tower over the first few kilometres of the track. Beech, with their slowly decomposing acidic leaves and thick, shady canopy, make it tough for any undergrowth apart from mosses and lichens to survive here. This creates forests that are surprisingly dark and eerily quiet, even in summer. Cascading streams echo loudly in the stillness. Bird calls, however, resound with the sharpness and clarity that sound technicians can only dream of achieving.

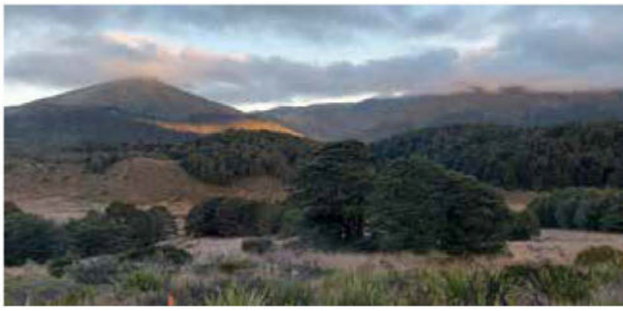
Thanks to the tireless efforts of the Friends of Flora volunteers, sections of the park are once again home to a wide variety of native birds. Not just the more resilient tui, bellbird, robin, weka, piwakawaka, and kea, but after an exhaustive fourteen-year program, rifleman, kaka and spotted kiwi rorora now dwell in the park.

For me personally, the fourteen kilometres from Salisbury Lodge hut over Gordon's Pyramid, and down to Flora car park compares favourably with the Tongariro Crossing in terms variety of terrain and flora, spectacular views, and bizarre geology. It's also shorter, with lots more native birds. Putting aside the scenery, highlights of our trip included sharing an evening at the hut with a group from Howick Tramping Club, a couple from Tasmania, and Wilma, Jess, and Olivia – a group of workmates, all enjoying time together in the wilderness. It was also heartening to come across a dad-and-son pair on an over-nighter, and during a brief stop at Mt Arthur hut, a mum-and-daughter off to summit Mt Arthur.

My first surprise when we arrived was the number of cars packed into the spacious parking area. I should not have been surprised.

GORDONS PYRAMID
MT ARTHUR HUT 3HR 7.2KM
LODGE





Top: Summit of Gordons Pyramid in sunshine / Bottom Left: G2 Early morning sun struggling to shine on a cold, damp beech forest on the foothills of Gordon's Pyramid / Right: Early morning view of Gordon's Pyramid and Mt Arthur from Salisbury Lodge Hut

> "It was not long before I entered the sheltered but gloomy forest. Early morning light struggled to shine through the foliage. Pale wisps of Aaron's beard hung from the damp branches. Huge lichen and moss-laden boulders lay across the track at all angles, as if scattered randomly by a giant's hand."

Adventures ranged from pleasant day-walks on wide gravel tracks to multi-day expeditions into the wilderness. The locals appreciated the beauty of this place. Within minutes of setting out, we met five-year-old Calib and his dad, returning from an overnight adventure to Gridiron Shelter; swimming in the pool under a waterfall, cooking a meal on an open fire, gazing out at the stars, searching for satellites as they lay in their sleeping bags. A memorable couple of days.

Once past Flora Hut, the track meandered gently through a mix of beech and podocarp trees, until we reached a gateway proudly labelled "Gridiron Gulch Elev 2650ft Pop 457". A fitting monument to the mining and farming pioneers who lived and worked here perhaps? Gridiron Shelter was the perfect place for an early lunch stop – a makeshift table and bench under the overhanging rock, with views to a forested gully and the sounds of the nearby waterfall as a backdrop. It was not long before the local robin joined us. Flittering energetically between the bunk and the floor, then onto our packs, the table, and back again. It was easy to imagine how Calib would have enjoyed his visit here.

Just beyond the shelter, a swing bridge marks the end of the vehicle track and onto a well-travelled trail through lush forest. Bellbirds, tui, and robin called out as we meandered along the trail, but the noisy arrival of two parrots stopped us. We strained to identify the two birds silhouetted against the shady canopy, hoping they were kaka. It was impossible to identify any colour, and unfortunately, they took off again, leaving us wondering.

Leaving the treeline and out onto the tablelands is a welcome sight - it signalled Salisbury hut was not far away. Wilma and her crew of workmates emerged from the trees and joined us as we made our way to the hut. It was a pleasure to share stories as we followed the rolling, meandering path across the valley of snow tussock. This is an easy trip in summer but as Donald, my hiking companion reminded me, the tussock can be covered with snow during winter.

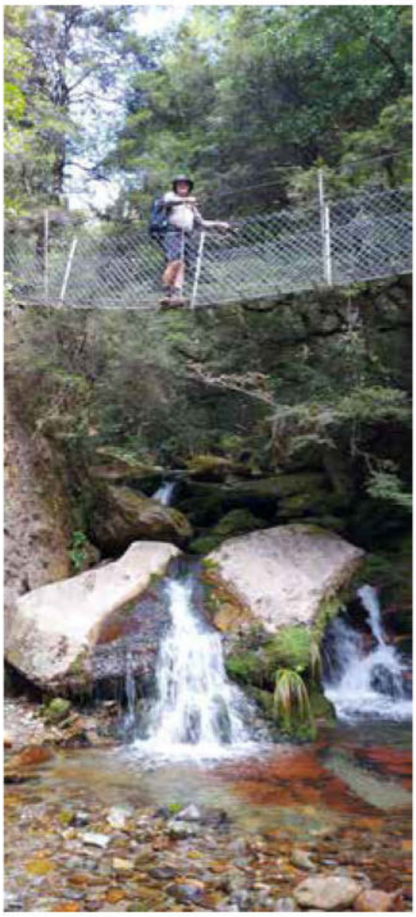
Howick Tramping club was using the hut as a base for exploring the area. We enjoyed their company over coffee as we soaked up a priceless view of the Pyramid and Mount Arthur. A huge stack of firewood and a woodstove were another reminder that at 1260 metres, this hut is nestled well above the snowline.

I pitched my tent on a small flat site between the trees, layered with a bed of soft beech leaves, and only just big enough for the Macpac Microlight. The raucous calls of two weka rang out across the valley after dusk, as the pair made a last forage before heading to the security of their nest. Shortly after, I was dozing off to the pleasantly gentle sounds of morepork.

I would be on my own for the second leg of the trip. Donald, still recovering from an injury, wisely chose the easier option of returning via Flora hut. I nearly changed my mind when I woke next day. The dawn air was chilly, and my destination - the surrounding peaks- were cloaked in cloud, suggesting high winds and rain.

Howick Tramping Club group Salisbury Lodge hut

"Howick Tramping club was using the hut as a base for exploring the area. We enjoyed their company over coffee as we soaked up a priceless view of the Pyramid and Mount Arthur."



Donald crossing the swingbridge at Gridiron Shelter

Energising myself with a regular-sized breakfast of hot Backcountry Cuisine Cinnamon Rice Porridge, I packed up and set off across the red tussock in high spirits onto the poled route to Mt Arthur. I had little idea of what a memorable day it would be.

It was not long before I entered the sheltered but gloomy forest. Early morning light struggled to shine through the foliage. Pale wisps of Aaron's beard hung from the damp branches. Huge lichen and moss-laden boulders lay across the track at all angles, as if scattered randomly by a giant's hand. I managed to avoid cobwebs that glistened in the dim light, but others surprised me and latched onto my jacket and hat.

Hebe and dracophyllum lined the edge of the treeline as I emerged out of the protection of the bush and onto an eroded trail that disappeared into the mist. Tussock bent and danced as gusts of wind tracked across the exposed ridge. I stopped, pulled on a windproof jacket, tightened the hood, swallowed several mouthfuls of water, and strode off onto the windswept track.

Occasional breaks in the cloud gave me glimpses of the hut way below, looking snug and protected on the forest edge. Conditions worsened as I made my way to the summit of the Pyramid. Once at the peak at 1489 metres, the wind gusts strengthened, trying to knock me off balance. Thankfully, the cloud cleared, giving me a clear view of Mt Arthur, but the wind was still energetic enough for me to consider turning back. Even metre-high Giant Spaniards, with their spiked points looming up above the tussock, leaned away from the gusts.

I reached the steep, rocky bank when I caught the faint sound of voices. Two fellow explorers emerged onto the top of the short climb as I reached it, stopping for a brief chat before heading off. Amazingly, that momentary contact with other humans coincided with the wind easing – surely a sign!

Within an hour, I reached Horseshoe Basin in shirtsleeves under a bright sky. The ice-smoothed basin of 450-million-year-old limestone is similar to nearby Mt Owen, the scene of a famous movie series. Beneath its pale, polished surface lies a network of unexplored cave systems. A circuitous route around the basin then climbs to emerge onto the ridge leading from Mt Arthur hut to the summit. The contrast to that morning could not be greater - expansive views of Tasman Bay in sunshine, passing day-trippers venturing to and from the summit, and then chatting to fellow explorers over lunch in the shade of Mt Arthur hut. From there, it is a refreshing stroll through beech forest on a zig-zagging gravel path down to the car park.

I prefer to use Jetboil, Backcountry Cuisine, Merrill and Macpac products.

Photo: Mountain Equipment

outdoor action

YOUR ADVENTURE STARTS HERE

OUR BRANDS

MOUNTAIN EQUIPMENT
xtorm
WILDCOUNTRY
SOURCE
SOURCE tactical gear
TACTICAL DESIGNS
bionicdry
TERRA NOVA
WILD COUNTRY by Terra Nova
BRUNTON
extremities
SPRAY WAY

Explore more with Outdoor Action.

Join our community for adventure news, gear updates, and exclusive perks - plus $10 off your first order.

Discover Outdoor Action, where two decades of trust meets a meticulously curated selection of exclusive outdoor gear. Our commitment goes beyond being locally owned; it's about creating unparalleled adventures with world-class brands. Embark on your greatest journey yet. Your adventure starts here, with us, every step of the way.

Follow us

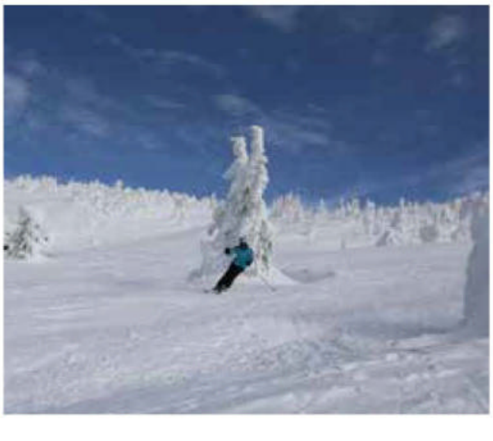
www.outdooraction.co.nz

CANADA REVISITED:

BIG WHITE AND SUN PEAKS SKI RESORTS

Words by Vicki Knell
Images by the Adventure Away-Team (Steve, Lynne, Vicki & Greg)

Big White Village fireworks night



Skiing amonst the snow ghosts

Arriving to heavy snowfall on the eve of our 2 week ski trip to Big White and Sun Peaks we were reminded of how magical it is to ski Canada. The luxury of ski in/ski out accommodation, the ethereal winter wonderland night lights, the excitement of waking on our first day to falling snow and the promise of fresh powder - it all came flooding back. This is what we had come back to Canada for. While we have been incredibly lucky to have skied in Canada before it has been a few years and we had wondered if it would still be as magical as we remembered, would it still hold the attraction for us? We were not disappointed.

Getting there was easy - direct flights from Auckland to Vancouver, followed by one short domestic flight to Kelowna and the Big White shuttle delivered us to our door at Sundance Resort. Our shuttle driver Dean entertained us all the way up the hill with jokes, stories and hot tips about where to ski - a great introduction to the warm Canadian hospitality we continued to enjoy for the rest of our trip. In fact one of the standout features of Big White are the resort staff, everyone was so friendly and helpful. Dean also put us on to the delicious BeaverTails (imagine a cross between a pancake and a donut all hot and dripping with sweetness). We enjoyed them on more than one occasion when skiing over in the Gem Lake area.

We stayed at Sundance Resort with its family friendly facilities - hot outdoor pool and spas, games room, pool table and lounge. From our apartment we had easy ski in/out access to the Bullet Express chair which drops into the TELUS Park Chair and over to Black Forest Express. Access to the rest of the Big White lifts was also easy and offered plenty of gladed areas for popping in and out of. With 119 designated trails and a total of 105 km of marked runs we had plenty of choice for our 7 days of exploring.

Our days were spent wallowing in fresh powder, relishing the opportunity to ski between trees and reacquainting ourselves with soft mogul runs. For kiwis the novelty of skiing trees never gets dull, we just don't get to experience this at home so we spent plenty of time enjoying the better visibility offered by the trees when it was snowing or cloudy. Runs like Born to Run, Paradise, Kalina's Rainbow and Blue Sapphire all previous favourites were revisited. With more time spent in the Black Forest area we found new favourites in Bear's Paw, Whiskey Jack and Cougar Alley. We only nearly lost Greg once to a tree well and plenty of fun was had by us all popping in and out of the trees with varying degrees of success.

Fresh powder and trees, the perfect combination at Big White Ski Resort

Skiing amonst the trees is a real highlight to skiing in Canada

> "Runs like Born to Run, Paradise, Kalina's Rainbow and Blue Sapphire all previous favourites were revisited."

Big White Snow Hosts

Fresh snow in front of Sundance Resort

It wasn't hard to find the Big White Mountain hosts - dressed in bright orange, these local volunteers have a wealth of local knowledge and an obvious love for 'their mountain'. We found hosts at the top of chairlifts and in the village area. It's recommended you take up the invitation to meet in the village centre at 10am and link up with a mountain host who will ski with you for a few runs showing you the hidden gems Big White has to offer - all for free!

During our week at Big White we fell into a routine of skiing for the day, adjourning to the hot spa and meeting/catching up with other Sundance residents late afternoon and then wandering back across the short and very pretty snow path into the village for dinner. With the many and varied options each night we always found somewhere to dine. We enjoyed live music and awesome pizzas at 'The Globe', delicious fine dining at the incredibly picturesque 'The Woods' restaurant, with 'The BullWheel' becoming our local haunt due to its location near our accommodation and their delicious bar menu. The Big White family vibe was evident with free events each night - the carnival atmosphere in the village with outdoor fire pits, the clock tower, the gondola down to Happy Valley with the tubing and all the fairy lit buildings was something we really enjoyed.

As a side note our trip coincided with Trump imposing trade tariffs on Canada. Regarding this hot topic of conversation we found the normally polite and politically neutral Canadians to be fired up and very united in their opinions regarding their bordering neighbour. Many interesting conversations were had in the spa pool at the end of each day's skiing.

The transfer from Big White to Sun Peaks was an easy shuttle ride to the airport where we picked up a rental car and drove the scenic route from Kelowna, alongside Okanagan Lake heading north-west through Vernon and Kamloops. You can organise a shuttle to take you directly from Big White to Sun Peaks but we chose to hire a car and drive the 21/2 hours instead.

Big White™
SKI RESORT
IT'S THE SNOW
Kelowna, BC Canada

CANADA'S FAVOURITE FAMILY RESORT

GUARANTEED SNOW
7.5m Average
Annual Snowfall

CANADA'S LARGEST
Totally Ski-In, Ski-Out
Resort Village

VAST TERRAIN
3,140 Hectares
119 Runs & 16 Lifts

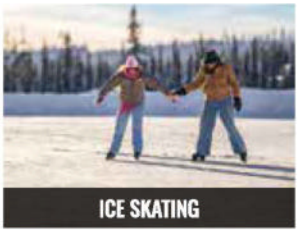
NO LINE UPS
Second Largest Lift
Capacity in Canada

PROUDLY CANADIAN
LOCALLY FAMILY-OWNED & OPERATED

CANADA'S™
FAVOURITE FAMILY RESORT

SNOWSHOEING

UNIQUE DINING EXPERIENCES



ICE SKATING

DOG-SLEDDING

PRIVATE HOT TUB APARTMENTS

BOOK DIRECT & SAVE FOR BEST APARTMENTS & DEALS

FLIGHTS · ACCOMMODATION · LIFTS · LESSONS · HIRE

☎ 00-800-2449-4483 ✉ CENRES@BIGWHITE.COM BIGWHITE.COM

One last run at Sun Peaks - Image compliments of Sun Peaks

> "Although Sun Peaks had grown significantly since our first visit, it had not lost its magical charm and great skiing."

On arrival at Sun Peaks we settled into our 'on the mountain' apartment at Crystal Forest, and wandered along the narnia-like village walkway in search of dinner. There was a realisation among us that Sun Peaks had grown significantly since our last visit; there have been a lot of new condominiums, townhouses and luxury homes developed with a number of people now choosing to live at Sun Peaks permanently. In fact the growth has been phenomenal particularly in the summer growth of the mountain's accessibility to mountain biking and the popularity of the Sun Peaks golf course. Sun Peaks has just celebrated 25 years of summer chair access for mountain biking. The village centre however hasn't changed so much and we were reminded of just how magical this place is, especially at night.

Sun Peaks village centre, magical.

With fresh trails to explore over the coming days and the arrival of new snowfall mid-week we systematically worked our way around the three mountain peaks that make up Sun Peaks Resort; Tod Mountain, Sundance and Mount Morrisey.

Sun Peaks isn't just sprawling, it's meticulously dialled for skiers who want options without compromise. With 13 lifts, 144 trails and 16 gladed zones woven across three distinct peaks, it's the kind of mountain that keeps pulling you back for another lap, not because you missed something, but because every run offers something new.

Cinnamon buns, a Sun Peaks cult classic!

Midweek, a timely snowfall sent us straight to West Bowl, the newest addition on Tod Mountain. It's big, raw, and remote enough to feel like you've earned every turn. Views from the upper ridgelines stretch for days, but the real reward was underfoot; deep, untouched powder that held surprisingly well through the afternoon.

Over on Sundance, Three Bears delivered the goods. A gladed line with just the right gradient and well-spaced trees, it's the kind of terrain that lets you open it up and thread the line with confidence.

Image compliments of Sun Peaks Resort

Mid-life crisis on Mt Morrisey, Sun Peaks Resort, BC, Canada

But it was Morrisey that stole the show as the weather turned. With spring-like warmth teasing the lower slopes, Morrisey held snow better than expected. Shaded tree runs kept their edge, and the terrain stayed rideable right into the late hours of the day.

Fuel came in the form of cinnamon buns; Sun Peaks' cult classic. Yes, they live up to the hype. And after last lifts, we tracked down the bar that still serves Blueberry Tea, a ritual from our previous trip introduced by none other than Nancy Greene herself. Still as potent, still as satisfying.

Unfortunately for me a bit of a slip while out walking earlier in the week resulted in the wrenching of an old injury to my knee - however after a few days rest and some fairly serious strapping and bracing I was able to get out for a few runs. To be honest even though I was gutted, I gave myself a bit of an uppercut and reminded myself that there I was sitting in one of the most beautiful spots on earth - not a bad place to endure some enforced rest!

So why return to Canada to ski? Because some places leave more than just impressions, they carve themselves into your memory with the kind of depth that lasts a lifetime. It’s the silence of snow falling hard and fast on an empty trail. The weightless sensation of gliding through cold, dry powder that barely resists your edges. It’s the late nights with your crew, tired, happy, and half-laughing, half-cringing at whatever near miss or wipeout had you all wide-eyed hours earlier.

These are the days you hold onto. For the time when the knees might not take another drop or the lungs can’t handle another hike-to line. Until then, you keep coming back, for the snow, for the mountains, and for moments that feel like they might never come again.

"It’s the silence of snow falling hard and fast on an empty trail. The weightless sensation of gliding through cold, dry powder that barely resists your edges. It’s the late nights with your crew, tired, happy, and half-laughing, half-cringing at whatever near miss or wipeout had you all wide-eyed hours earlier. These are the days you hold onto."

IFMGA UIAGM IVBV
NEW ZEALAND MOUNTAIN GUIDES ASSOCIATION
Let us take you on a great adventure...

ALPINE RECREATION
TREK | CLIMB | SKI

www.alpinerecreation.com

LAUGH LINES NOT LIFT LINES
SUN PEAKS.
WHERE YOU BELONG.
SUNDANCE LODGE

Secwépemc Territory. Reuben Krabbe photo.

Canada's second largest ski area.
Visit sunpeaksresort.com/winter

TOURISM Sun Peaks

SUN PEAKS
BC CANADA

CLIMBING IN NZ:

HENRY BOOKER

Words and images by Sarah Hay

Henry Booker is redefining adventure, tackling the challenges of ice and alpine climbing. From big walls in Yosemite to icy ascents in New Zealand and Canada, he's pushing the limits of what's possible in climbing.

This climber's journey is marked by both ambition and a love for the sport that transcends competition. An alpinist as well as rock climber, Henry has been on some epic adventures and has a future goal of climbing a grade 30 outdoors. He is determined to keep pushing their limits and stay engaged with climbing for life. Balancing studies at the University of Canterbury with a passion for the outdoors, Henry envisions a long-term journey of growth, embracing both traditional and alpine climbing.

Competitions offer both challenges and rewards. While focusing on the first route can set the tone for their performance, he's learned to combat self-doubt with a positive mindset and a good warm-up routine. The most fulfilling aspect of competing is seeing tangible improvement and the payoff from dedicated training, though his current focus has shifted to outdoor climbing.

Their advice for newcomers? "Have fun, make friends, and enjoy the process." With a grounded approach to climbing and life, their story reflects the joys of a sport that combines personal achievement with camaraderie and nature.

How did you first get into rock climbing? What do you enjoy most about it? I got into rock climbing because I was an energetic 8yr old and didn't mesh with team sports. My mum booked me in for climbing lessons and I was natural with it and found it was a way to focus and seeing improvement got me motivated to do more. These days what I most enjoy about climbing is being able to see amazing places and constantly pushing my own limits.

Who are your sponsors? Southern Approach and Alpine team shared sponsors: Macpac, Radix, Lowa

How often do you go climbing, and what types of goals do you set for yourself? I work in a climbing gym, to pay for upcoming trips and anything else related to it. I climb outdoors roughly 2 or 3 times a week and train indoors (at a climbing gym or home woody) twice a week also.

Can you describe an adventure from your recent Yosemite trip that stands out for you? I tried to climb Free Rider on the first day in the valley. Took too long on the bottom pitches so we bailed and went up The Nose instead. I quickly learned that rope management and prior knowledge of the exact hauling systems and belay techniques is essential to make things fast.

Before leaving to Yosemite I had no idea just how much of an undertaking it really is and I didnt train and master certain things accordingly. We spent 3 nights on the nose and did very little free climbing, the majority of it was aid climbing. Even "grade 17" cracks feel totally foreign and brutally hard coming from NZ with little to no places that match the style.

Climbing The Nose was a massive reality check, and I learned so much from that one climb and from then I understood what the immense scale of El Cap and climbed a famous aid route called "The Shield" and freed a big chunk of Free Rider including "The Boulder Problem" pitch, only getting shut down on the offwidths.

From climbing the nose in 3 nights to doing my best to free climb as much of free rider over 2 nights, most days finishing in the afternoon and chilling out for the night felt like massive progress that only getting thrown in the deep end can really give you.

We took 60 litres of water up on the wall, ate peanut butter and cheese wraps for lunch, and a radix dehy meal for dinner, with 3 OSM bars (plus a few other sweet treats we had to sparingly divide between us) each in between. 2 of the evenings we could see and hear thunder and rain but it managed to avoid us apart from a brief shower during the whole time spent on the wall.

Tell us about competive climbing? I competed and aspired to achieve at a high level in competitions for my entire youth, and the experience was always incredibly rewarding. I had entire friend groups that I would only see at competitions so I loved the social aspect. Seeing how my training applied to improvement at competitions made me very motivated to sink time into it. As I transitioned to outdoor climbing I stopped prioritising comps and my placements started dropping so I found not much point in pursuing them beyond a casual context

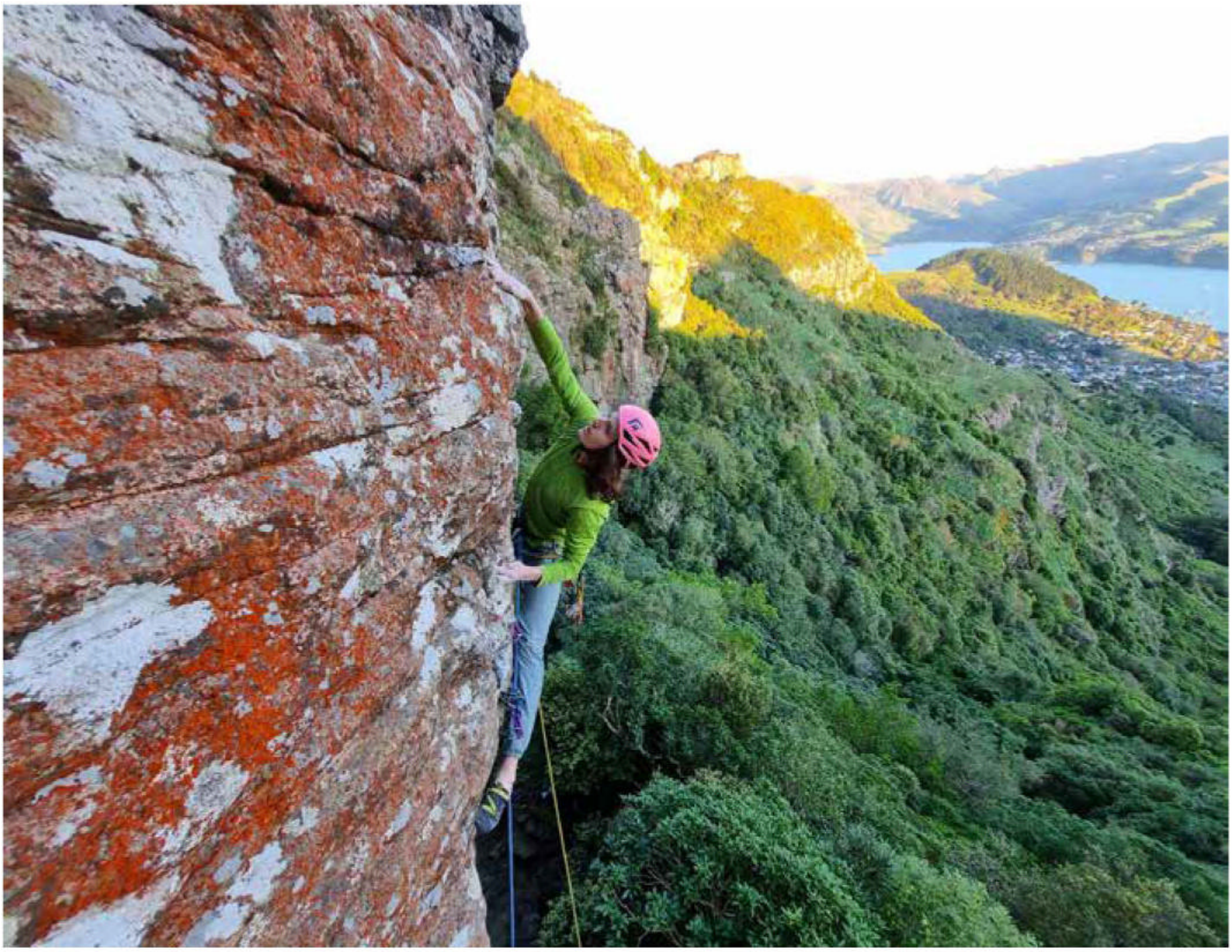
How do you prepare or train for your outdoor projects and goals? Goal specific training depending on the objective/trip coming up. I tend to do so much at once that I find it difficult to do that to the fullest extent. For sport climbing it's usually a case of getting good weekly mileage for power endurance, with some weights/strength training included. Recruiting the movement of a project by just getting out and being on it is the most valuable thing for me. For big walling the priority changes to lots of cardio and general wall fitness so I can climb hard pitches consecutively before burning out. For bouldering... get swol and get powerful.

Tell us about ice climbing, did you do this while overseas? Do you ice climb in NZ winter? What is it about Ice Climbing that draws you in? My first experience of ice climbing was on Mt Ruapehu, where Jacob Kuchler set up a top rope for me. I borrowed some boots and rusty crampons, rented a straight shaft walking axe, and borrowed my mum's puffa jacket.

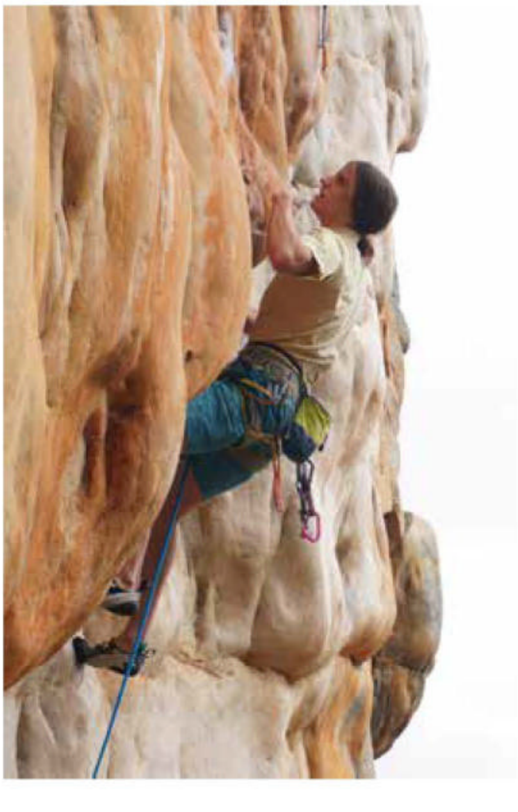
I properly ice climbed on an NZAT training trip at Wye Creek, then went to Canada for 3 weeks with them. Just like Yosemite, being thrown into a world class area from knowing nothing makes you learn FAST. I started out that trip being scared on everything, wondering what I was doing there and not sport climbing in the Blueys instead but quickly learned the basic technique skills and at the end of the trip I felt like a badass (felt being the key word).

Every year I climb at the Remarkables for the technical mixed climbing. The whole point of the NZAT mentorship and Canada trip is to become proficient on the ice so you can be efficient and safe on the mountains back in NZ. I enjoy Ice Climbing as the pure ice features create aesthetic lines in inaccessible places, and it takes a great degree of commitment and proficiency to be able to do them.

" I enjoy Ice Climbing as the pure ice features create aesthetic lines in inaccessible places, and it takes a great degree of commitment and proficiency to be able to do them."



Henry's notable comp achievements: *2021 Open National Lead Champ, CNZ Open Boulder 2024 3rd place, Gatekeeper (V11) Spaceboy (32), Climbing 3 routes on El Cap, Aoraki (mt cook) grand traverse, The 2nd Ascent of Dreamliner*



Ice climbing can seem scary and dangerous, how do you manage the safety aspects and which climbs are safe to approach? With Mixed climbing in places such as the remarkables, you're climbing on rock AND ice so place ice screws and trad gear for protection. On pure ice climbs where the only protection is screws, when you lead you treat the ice screws as something that will save your life but may get hurt if you actually fall, so the idea is to climb something within your ability and avoid falling. 3 screws at anchors is always reassuring and in good ice will more than comfortably take 3 peoples weight.

Ice climbing always takes weather and conditions into account. Drastic temperature changes can make the ice more brittle and less stable so pay attention to the weather, and also see how it feels on the day. Temperatures close to or above freezing are when you should use a lot of caution as to whether you want to be out or not, because it will be melting. This isn't taking avalanche conditions into account, which you also need to be educated about. Some climbs have less avalanche hazard than others so tailoring your objective to the conditions is very important. Some seasons you may not get out at all.

What are your climbing goals for the future? Any specific routes, grades, or achievements you're aiming for? Wherever climbing takes me and where my interests lie at that moment. If something makes me psyched I'll probably go do it no matter the discipline.

TASMAN GLACIER, AORAKI/MOUNT COOK

WINTER DIFFERENT

Welcome to the Mackenzie Region, the heart of the South Island. Just 2.5 hours drive between Christchurch and Queenstown, the area transforms into a winter playground over the cooler months. Enjoy uncrowded skifields, epic ski and snowshoe touring terrain, glacier and backcountry ski experiences, breath-taking scenery and endless outdoor adventures. Adventure different this winter.

CHRISTCHURCH
AORAKI/MT COOK
LAKE TEKAPO
MACKENZIE REGION
QUEENSTOWN

Legendary **MACKENZIE** MACKENZIENZ.COM

Mt Luxmore summit ← 10 min
Please keep to the track

THE KEPLER TRACK:
ADVENTURE AND FREEDOM

Words and images by Hamish Bourke

The Kepler Track is one of those hikes that gets under your skin, an unforgettable journey through one of New Zealand's most stunning landscapes. As lovers of nature and all things outdoors, the Kepler is a place that captures our attention, not just because of the breathtaking scenery but for the adventure and freedom it offers.

It is a hike that leaves a lasting impression, and who better to share some stories from the trail than Hamish Bourke, Merrell NZ’s Marketing Manager. We sat down with Hamish to hear about his experiences on this iconic trail and to discover what makes the Kepler so attractive to hikers of all levels.

The Kepler Drawcard

The Kepler Track has everything you could want in a hike: rugged ridgelines, alpine meadows, and wild forests, with views that seem to stretch endlessly. But what drew me in most is the sense of freedom it gives. Every step feels like a chance to disconnect, to leave behind the noise of the world, and just be in the moment. There’s something about the remote, raw beauty of Fiordland that puts life into perspective.

One of my favorite parts of the track is the section just past Luxmore Hut, where you climb up toward the Luxmore Summit. It’s a challenging climb, but the moment you reach the top and see the world unfold before you, it’s all worth it. You can see for miles—Lake Te Anau below, and the jagged peaks of Fiordland stretching into the distance.

The Kea: Fiordland’s Mischievous Companion

One of the highlights of any Kepler hike is the kea, New Zealand’s cheeky alpine parrot. These guys are known for their intelligence and curiosity, often making appearances near the trail, sometimes getting a little too close for comfort. I’ve had them land right next to me, staring with those sharp eyes, or, even more mischievous, unzipping my backpack to see what’s inside. Their call is unmistakable, echoing through the mountains. As they play in the alpine meadows or hang out near the huts, they remind me that I’m not alone in this wild place. They’re fearless, often coming right up to hikers, making them both entertaining and a little troublesome. But hey, they’re part of the adventure, and I’ve learned to keep my gear packed away tightly!

Hiking the Kepler Track: My Top Tips: If you’re thinking of tackling the Kepler Track, here are a few tips from my own experience that will make your hike even better:

1. Pack Smart for Any Weather

Fiordland weather is unpredictable—rain can turn to sunshine, or the wind can pick up out of nowhere. I always pack layers, including a good rain jacket, and keep my gear protected from the elements.

2. Start Early

I’ve found that the best way to enjoy the trail is by starting early each day. The mornings are peaceful, with fewer crowds, and you get to enjoy the trail in its most tranquil state. Plus, you’ll have more time to stop and take in the incredible views without feeling rushed.

3. Respect the Kea
Those mischievous kea might try to steal your snacks or unpack your bag, so always keep your food stored safely. They're entertaining, but also super clever, so don't let them get the better of you!

4. Take Your Time on the Ridgelines
The ridgelines on the Kepler Track are where the magic happens. Don't rush through them! Take the time to stop, breathe, and take in the incredible mountain views. For me, those moments on top of the world are always the highlight.

5. Be Flexible
The Kepler has a way of surprising you, so stay flexible and trust the trail. Whether it's adjusting to a change in weather or taking a longer break to enjoy the view, the journey is all about rolling with it and embracing the unexpected.

Choosing the Right Gear
If I were to choose a Merrell hiking shoe to take on the Kepler, I'd go with the Merrell Moab 3. They're comfortable, durable, and perfect for the mix of conditions you'll face on the trail. With great cushioning and a Vibram sole for traction, they handle everything from rocky paths to slippery ridgelines.

Why Hiking Inspires Me
For me, hiking the Kepler Track isn't just about the trail—it's about the escape. It's the chance to disconnect from the chaos of everyday life and connect with friends and other hikers. There's something truly special about being out in the wild, surrounded by nothing but mountains, lakes, and the sounds of nature. It's not just the physical challenge of the hike, but the mental clarity it gives me.

Hiking has this incredible way of pushing you beyond your limits and showing you what you're capable of. And every time I reach the summit or pause to watch the clouds roll over the mountains, I'm reminded of why I hike—it's the freedom and the challenge.

Final Thoughts
The Kepler Track is a journey through one of the most stunning parts of New Zealand. With its wild landscapes, unpredictable weather, and incredible wildlife, it offers something new every time you step onto the trail. Whether you're after adventure, peace, or a sense of freedom, the Kepler has it all.

So, if you're ready for an adventure that will take you to the heart of Fiordland, I highly recommend the Kepler Track. It's a place that will leave you feeling recharged, inspired, and maybe just a little more in awe of the world around you.
Happy hiking!

black crows™

all terrain
collection
winter 2025

Available from leading retailers:
Auckland: Snowcentre, Taupo: Gordons, Wellington: Gordons,
Canterbury: Gnomes, Snow and Surf,Wanaka, MT Outdoors,
Queenstown: Small Planet, Dunedin: Beggs Ski Shop

Distributed by Outfitters: 0800 021 732

Find the full collection on www.black-crows.nz

THE FUTURE OF SNOW

THE EFFECT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Words by Kate Evans

Over the coming years and decades, climate change will affect every aspect of our lives—including how we spend time in nature. Award-winning science journalist Kate Evans, in collaboration with NZ Mountain Safety Council, takes a close look at what climate change will mean for seasonal snow—and for our rivers—and what these changes may mean for outdoor adventures in Aotearoa.

On the morning of 18 July 2022, Aoraki/Mt Cook avalanche forecaster Taichiro Naka was in his room in the Alpine Guides' staff accommodation building at Mount Cook village. It was pouring, and unseasonably warm; a storm had rolled in from the northwest over the Tasman Sea. Naka knew it was probably raining higher up in the mountains, too, and on a larger-than-usual snowpack, the second biggest for midwinter since snow-depth records started at Mueller Hut in 2010.

The day before, Naka had issued a warning via the NZ Avalanche Advisory (NZAA), the country's official backcountry avalanche forecasting service provided by NZ Mountain Safety Council (MSC). *"Very dangerous avalanche conditions,"* he'd written. *"All ingredients for destructive wet avalanches are here…Travel in avalanche terrain is NOT recommended."*

Now, as he listened to the rain drumming down on the corrugated iron roof, he could hear something else, too: a deep, continual rumbling, like the world's longest thunderclap. When the roar was over, Naka grabbed his binoculars, camera, telephoto lens, raincoat and gumboots, and jumped into his car.

One minute later, he reached Hooker Valley Road. The clouds lifted, and he could see a massive avalanche sprawling down Kitchener Creek, a river of rubbly ice and snow muddied at the end with dirt, sticks and even small shrubs the monster had scraped off the valley floor as it charged down the mountain.

The rock berm built by the Department of Conservation just 4 years earlier to protect Mount Cook village against a 1-in-100-year avalanche had worked perfectly, diverting the flow of snow safely away from the town. *"Money well spent,"* says Naka.

WILD STORMS AND WEAK LAYERS

The 2022 storm brought 550 mm of snow and rain to the Southern Alps in just over 72 hours, an *"unprecedented winter rainfall"* event in this location, according to a paper published in the Geophysical Research Letters science journal in 2023. Since 1928, only three other storms have produced more rainfall, but they all happened in summer.

The warmer-than-usual winter temperatures meant it rained rather than snowed, even at high elevations. Water saturating the deep snowpack caused the Kitchener avalanche—the largest there since 1986, running nearly 2 km and destroying almost a hectare of forest—as well as numerous other avalanches and debris flows elsewhere in the mountains.

The winter of 2023, by contrast, featured a completely different climate problem, but one that also caused widespread avalanches. Snow fell at the start of the season, and then there was a long dry spell. That caused the surface of the snow to harden, with sugar-like crystals then growing on top. When snow eventually fell, it didn't bond properly to the hard layer beneath causing a persistent weak layer.

"We had a persistent weak layer pretty much everywhere in the Southern Alps," says Kevin Boekholt, a director of Alpine Guides and an NZAA forecasting coordinator based in Methven.

That meant any travel in the mountainous backcountry, including mountaineering, skiing or boarding, risked triggering a slab

Images of the Mount Cook avalanche in July 2022 by Taichiro Naka.

avalanche, even at a distance. *"Somebody can be skiing down on a relatively flat area of terrain, and they can send a wave of energy through the snowpack and trigger an avalanche on an adjacent slope."*

That's exactly what happened in 2023: we saw some of the biggest natural and human-triggered avalanches possible in New Zealand, says MSC Operations Manager Nathan Watson. There were several close calls, but no-one was killed. That year, the NZAA frequently warned of the dangerous conditions caused by the persistent weak layer.

People changed their plans accordingly, says Boekholt, cancelling trips or heading to the West Coast or upper Haupapa/Tasman Glacier where conditions were safer. *"It significantly affected the whole backcountry industry."*

There was less demand for his company's helicopter service, and backcountry huts, such as those in the Cass Valley, had cancellations for months. *"People were well aware that conditions in the backcountry weren't safe. They really took heed of the avalanche advisory last year, and as a result of that there weren't a lot of people in the mountains."*

Boekholt has worked as an alpine guide in the Southern Alps for 40 years. While there's always been variability, winters used to be more predictable, he says. *"There's no normalised pattern anymore."*

These swings between extremes are expected to become more common as the climate warms, so what does the future hold for our snow and the rivers the meltwater feeds?

THE SCIENCE OF SNOW

Dr Todd Redpath grew up in Southland and spent high school and university going snowboarding at every opportunity. *"I used to spend all winter just trying to figure out how to get up the mountain at the weekend, and it hasn't really left me... It's a big motivator."*

Redpath, who is now a scientist, has spent years trying to answer what sounds like a simple question: what will climate change mean for recreation in the snow in New Zealand? *"Are we still going to be able to go snowboarding or skiing in 10 years? Fifty years? A hundred years, if I live that long?"*

That question is surprisingly difficult to answer. In other parts of the world, like the American Rockies, South American Andes and European Alps, there's a clear link between global warming and rising snowlines, shorter ski seasons, and less snow in fewer places. Here, the likely impacts are a little more complex to tease out, Redpath explains.

"We can't really say with a lot of confidence that we're going to see the snow season reduced by X percent or snow depth decreased by Y percent. That's still relatively tricky, and there just hasn't been a lot of research done in that space."

There are two main reasons it's tricky. Firstly, our records aren't very good. Snow cover at the national scale is easiest to measure from space, and we only have reliable, regular satellite data for the last quarter-century, from 2000.

The first attempt to scientifically model the potential impacts of climate change on snow across New Zealand was done by NIWA researchers in 2012; the results suggested we'll see much less snow at low elevations on average over the 21st century, and possibly marginally more at the highest elevations (above 2900 m.)

The other factor, though, is the dramatic variability in climate conditions from year to year, making it difficult to both untangle what role global warming is playing and to predict exactly how that warming might play out in the mountains.

Snow requires both cold and precipitation. Climate change is set to bring warmer temperatures, Redpath says, but also more precipitation in some places, especially the Southern Alps. When, where, and exactly how that precipitation will fall, as snow or rain, is frustratingly hard to predict.

Because of our location in the South Pacific, New Zealand is buffeted by a set of complex and interacting climate patterns, Redpath explains. Wind direction, timing, and a few degrees of variation in temperature can dictate when and where it snows. *"Quite subtle differences can play quite a big role here," he says.*

“If you’re someone that’s thinking about the flood hazard downstream, you’re not just considering the 150mm of rain in the forecast, you also have to think, how much snow is there? How much of that snow might melt, and what does that add to the runoff?” says Redpath. “That hasn’t really been thought of explicitly in New Zealand before.”

“A lot of our snowfall that does occur, occurs within quite a narrow range of temperatures close to zero degrees. So, any particular snow event in New Zealand can be really sensitive to exactly what orientation that air mass takes, is it a little bit warmer or a little bit cooler than normal? That can tip the balance quite quickly between a big snowfall event or a rain event in the middle of winter.”

In August 2020, for instance, warm winds and rain on snow closed Wānaka’s Treble Cone for nearly a week, the snowpack literally sliding off the mountain in some places. Masters student Anita Bentley, who Todd co-supervised, consulted three decades of ski patrollers’ observations from the Craigieburn club ski field in Canterbury from 1991 to 2019. She identified a gradual decline in snow depth over that period, but also, around half of the winter snow accumulation comes from snowfall events where you get more than 15 cm dumped at once. For ski fields, *“a few of these big snowfall events through the winter are really important”, says Redpath.*

In general, climate change is likely to bring more weather extremes—meaning the swings between storms and droughts seen in the South Island in 2022 and 2023 may become a feature of our future, he says.

RAGING RIVERS, IMITATES SNOWMELT

The kind of heavy rain on snow seen in 2022 has downstream implications, too, for people spending time in the outdoors well below the snowline. When rain melts snow, it can supercharge floodwaters, making rivers more dangerous and damaging infrastructure and homes. The July 2022 downpour took out an entire bridge on Ohau Road near Twizel, cutting off the nearby village and Lake Ohau Lodge, and caused the Omarama stream to jump its usual course. Similarly, in March 2019, snow- and ice-melt added 400 mm of runoff, increasing river flow in the Waiho catchment by 20% and destroying the state highway bridge at Franz Josef Village.

“If you’re someone that’s thinking about the flood hazard downstream, you’re not just considering the 150 mm of rain in the forecast, you also have to think, how much snow is there? How much of that snow might melt, and what does that add to the runoff?” says Redpath. *“That hasn’t really been thought of explicitly in New Zealand before.”*

But it is now. Hydrological forecasting scientist Dr Jono Conway from NIWA is leading a team of scientists working on exactly this question. They’re working on a 3-year project to develop a modelling system to accurately simulate snowmelt, which should help to predict flooding up to 5 days into the future. MSC is a project partner and will help to test the models, with the hope that this leads to improved safety information for public use.

If it’s funded long-term, in a few years’ time people planning a walk or tramp may be able to check not only the weather forecast on MSC’s trip planning tool Plan My Walk and avalanche forecast on the NZAA, but the snow-melt runoff predictions too, before heading out, he says.

“It will be another tool in the toolbox,” says Conway, a way for people to visualise the risks. *“So, you don’t look at a weather map and think, ‘Oh, it’s a sunny day, the rivers are going to be low’, when actually, because of heavy rainfall and snow melt the day before, there may still be high river flows.”*

SURVIVING VIA SNOWMAKING

In a related paper, the authors of the 2012 NIWA snow study predicted that under most likely future scenarios, the number of snow-days at commercial ski fields will fall as the century progresses, as will possible snow-making hours—a reduction of 40% percent by 2090. The snow cover is set to thin by then too. By how much is uncertain, but somewhere between 48% and 9% of current maximum snow depths, on average.

However, the paper also suggested that ski areas may be able to offset much of the natural snow losses with snowmaking. More research needs to be done, Redpath says, but in the meantime, ski field operators are investing heavily in state-of-the-art snowmaking equipment.

“Snowmakers are very much a necessary part of our industry now, and will be into the future as well,” says Mt Hutt Ski Area Manager James McKenzie.

The new electric machines are more energy-efficient and power up automatically when on-board temperature monitors tell them conditions are right for making good quality snow, says McKenzie, saving electricity, water, and money. *“Our windows for snowmaking are getting shorter and shorter, so we need to start up and shut down much more quickly than we used to,”* he says.

There’s also the option of additives that help catalyse the creation of snow crystals and reduce evaporation—a costly solution, but one that might need to be used more often as snowmaking weather-windows narrow.

Whakapapa ski field on Mt Ruapehu, on the other hand, has installed a “Snowfactory” which can spit out snow even when the mercury hits 20 degrees. But scientists point

Left to right: Aoraki/Mt Cook avalanche forecaster Taichiro Naka; Director at Alpine Guides, Kevin Boekholt; and MSC Operations Manager Nathan Watson (photo credit: Sarah Topliff)

out that the warmer and wetter the weather, the more energy and water is required to make snow. According to some estimates, running a Snowfactory for two days uses as much electricity as a typical NZ house does in a year.

More frequent wild weather is another emerging issue, says Ewan Mackie, Treble Cone's Ski Area Manager and RealNZ Sustainability Lead. *"At some point the snow will run out, but that is relatively distant. The challenge now is the extreme weather…that interrupts our ability to operate safely and reliably."*

Winters have always been variable in New Zealand, but commercial operators are preparing for the unpredictability to increase. At the same time, that variation does mean ski fields may continue to have some good years for a long time yet, says McKenzie.

"It just takes one snow event to set us up for the start of winter. Even in a cold winter you could end up with a pretty bad snow year—and vice versa.

"We've just got to be ready for whatever Mother Nature throws at us. That's always been the case, we know it's just going to get harder—which is why we're [investing] to help us do things more quickly and more efficiently."

BACKCOUNTRY BOOM
For two decades, backcountry skier, outdoor enthusiast and emergency doctor Marc Gutenstein and his group of mostly-medical friends have looked forward to their annual week off-piste together—old mates catching up in the backcountry for a mountain fix.

As they haul their skis up the lift-less slopes, they sometimes worry about their personal responsibility when it comes to the environment. *"If we drive around New Zealand chasing the snow, or occasionally ride in a helicopter if we're feeling extravagant, you can't deny that you're contributing carbon to the atmosphere, which is driving climate change. We've been through stages, some winters, of feeling like—how can we do this anymore?"*

At the same time, Gutenstein says, he knows addressing global warming requires collective and institutional action, and his individual contribution, while real, is small. Ultimately, he's decided he has to live with the contradictions, use his carbon on skiing—his passion—and sacrifice in other ways. He worries that when his own young children are grown, skiing may become too technically difficult, inaccessible or unaffordable. *"Will it just become a boutique activity? I kind of think they won't be skiing in New Zealand."*

Back in the day, Gutenstein and his mates often had slopes to themselves, but backcountry skiing has become a lot more mainstream, he says, partly due to improved and more affordable gear. But climate change may be playing a role, too—as glaciers retreat and snowlines rise, more people are crowding into fewer accessible places.

MSC anticipates backcountry recreation will continue to grow in popularity, says Operations Manager Nathan Watson. *"We expect to see more and more people looking towards the backcountry as a place to get their snow fix."*

"Snowmaking aside, most ski fields are already utilising all the easily accessible skiable terrain—there's little room for them to chase retreating snowlines higher up the mountain. And club fields, like Tukino, Temple Basin or Craigieburn don't currently have snowmakers; they're entirely dependent on natural snow, in a bad year, they'll simply have to close," says Watson.

"A backcountry skier or boarder can choose to go anywhere they like to find snow, so the opportunities and possibilities are near limitless compared to a ski area. In the backcountry, you can often go higher. The natural snow is there if you want to work for it, even in lean years like the current one."

For beginners, there are clear safety implications, he says, as the backcountry differs significantly from the controlled ski areas. *"An influx of people without the proper training, equipment and skills to manage their own safety risks, increasing injuries and accidents."*

Gutenstein says skiers and boarders need to be ready for a wide range of snow conditions if they plan to tackle the backcountry. *"You're going to get ice conditions, you're going to get crusty conditions, your skis are going to get ruined. You just have to be okay with skiing in extremely variable conditions. It's always been that way—but it's going to get worse."*

Climate change might make it harder to get the *"powder shots",* and require more careful attention to slope stability, weather and avalanche danger, *"but I just love being out there," he says.*

"We live in this completely glorious country. If it's crusty, if it's icy, if it's powdery, if it's rocky—whatever! We're out there, we're doing it... I'm in it for the whole experience."

Spot the mountain biker!

Preflight nerves

BRAGE VESTAVIK

INTO THE UNKNOWN

Words and images compliments or Red Bull

Somewhere deep in the unrelenting backcountry of Alaska, where mountains rise like frozen tsunamis and the snow-draped silence is broken only by the crunch of tyres on crusted ice, Brage Vestavik lets go of certainty, and rides into the unknown.

This isn't a playground. It's not a film set. It's not even a bike park dreamt up by some adrenaline-fuelled designer with a taste for punishment. This is Planet Alaska—the latest and boldest project from Red Bull and Vestavik himself, a cinematic sledgehammer that smashes open the limits of freeride mountain biking and rewrites the rules with every turn of the wheel.

The film, produced by Blur Media and now live on Red Bull Bike's YouTube channel, is unlike anything that's come before it. It's freeride, but raw. Precise, yet unpredictable. Inspired not by mountain bike edits, but by big-mountain skiing—the kind where the margins are razor-thin and hesitation is punished with consequence.

For Brage, this was never just another project. It was personal. After surgery and months spent rebuilding at Red Bull's Athlete Performance Center in Austria, his journey back to full throttle wasn't marked by medals or race results—it was marked by grit, by solitude, and by a single goal: Alaska.

"I grew up skiing, watching old snow films with my dad," he says. "Alaska was always the mecca. I never thought I'd actually be here—standing on top of those same spines, bike in hand."

But there he was, standing on razor-sharp ridgelines normally reserved for skis and snowboards, a tyre tread away from catastrophe. The descent? Not mapped. Not rehearsed. Just read, reacted to, and ridden.

"The unknown is what I love about riding," Brage says, his voice calm in that way only people comfortable with chaos can manage. "There's that moment where your brain checks out and your body just… knows. You're dancing with the mountain."

And what a dance it is.

There are no soft landings here. No sculpted kickers or second chances. The terrain is raw, the stakes are real, and the only way down is through sheer instinct. But that's exactly the point. Planet Alaska isn't about manufactured moments—it's about surrendering to the mountain and trusting the ride.

There's no flag-planting. No "first descent" ticker-tape. What Brage is doing isn't about conquering anything. It's about evolving—about borrowing the flowing lines of snowboarders, the terrain-reading instinct of skiers, and translating it all to a machine that's never had to survive this environment before.

"Big-mountain riding is still young in mountain biking," he explains. "Skiers and snowboarders have this deep relationship with the landscape. I wanted to tap into that. I wanted to move like water."

And that's what Planet Alaska captures so vividly. A rider not looking for airtime or accolades, but something purer. A reconnection to the feeling that started it all. The kid from Norway who fell in love with movement, now carving down the unforgiving wilds of the north—not to prove anything, but simply because it calls him.

"I don't even like calling it a sport," he shrugs. "It's just… what I do. It's how I connect to the world."

In a time when mountain biking is often defined by polished contests and controlled environments, Planet Alaska feels like a feral outlier—an unapologetic reminder that the soul of riding doesn't live in stadium lights. It lives out there, somewhere between the peaks and the permafrost, where the trail ends and instinct takes over.

For those who ride, and for those who dream of it, Planet Alaska isn't just a film—it's a wake-up call. A siren song for those willing to trade comfort for raw experience. And Brage? He's already miles ahead, carving a line that wasn't there yesterday, and won't be there tomorrow.

You can follow that trail, if you dare. Just know—there's no map. Only the mountain.

Planet Alaska is streaming now on Red Bull Bike's YouTube channel.

The Routeburn Classic is ranked in the top 10 most scenic in the world, it's easy to see why

ROUTEBURN CLASSIC

BUCKET LIST TRAIL RUN

By Nick Laurie

The Routeburn Classic is a trail race held annually in April, at the end of the Great Walk season over the 32k Routeburn Track. It, along with the Kepler Challenge, is one of the bucket list New Zealand trail races. The track is ranked in the top 10 most scenic in the world and runs from The Divide on the Te Anau(Western) side of the Southern Alps, several kilometres from the Homer Tunnel to Milford Sound, over to the Queenstown (Eastern) side, at the northern end of Lake Wakatipu. It overlaps both the Mount Aspiring and Fiordland National Parks, with the border and highest point being the Harris Saddle 1300m above sea level. Trampers usually take 3 days to complete the traverse, but the race record is 2h 43minutes, with the 350 strong field strung out between 3 hours and the 9 hour cutoff.

My goal was to better my time from last year and to finish in the first 3 of the guru (over 60) section. I had to make sure that I finished under 5 hours and that I finished in front of Wattie who had placed 3rd last year. The other 2 runners with us were Simon, who had battled back problems all year and had only recently been able to run consistently again. He had a very impressive CV and was definitely a dark horse. The last guy was Ash, a fellow Chiropractor, who had missed the last year of running trying to get a wayward knee to behave. He was racing in the children's section (50-60) so I didn't have to consider him tactically.

We arrived in Te Anau late Friday afternoon and went immediately to the race registration and our compulsory gear check. Because we cross an alpine environment we are required to carry a survival bag, spare gloves, a beanie, thermal top and pants and a seam sealed raincoat. This is taken very seriously, and a follow up inspection, may be completed before we cross the Saddle, if it looks as though you are not carrying the gear. I was able to squash all of this into my 12L camelback apex pro running vest. This year we all received soft flask drink bottle from the race sponsors Arc'teryx- probably one of the most useful registration gifts.

After a good feed at one of the bustling Te Anau restaurants on Friday night we woke the next morning to near perfect conditions. It was cloudy at the start, but we would climb up above this to pristine views of the Hollyford and Greenstone valleys. We were all very excited but none more than a Mother and Daughter who we met at the start who had previously entered twice before to have their mission thwarted by poor weather conditions. This is one of the difficulties that the race organisers have in running the event when there are only a few hikers on the track. Winter is always trying to make an appearance in April. Today, though, it would even got a bit hot as we were to be greeted by a bluebird day, once we climbed 1200m and were above the clouds.

> "Because we cross an alpine environment we are required to carry a survival bag, spare gloves, a beanie, thermal top and pants and a seam sealed raincoat."

ARC'TERYX
Routeb
CLASS
19

All smiles on the trail - Nick's mandatory push-up at the end of the race

The start of the race was self-seeded according to your estimated finish time. Learning from last year I pushed myself up a bit so that I didn't get caught behind some of the slower competitors. Wattie made a mistake here staying in a slower group because he had started out too fast last year and wanted to have some petrol left for the last 10k. I had a fuelling strategy of one pure liquid gel every 45 minutes and a sip of water every 15 mins. I had a shot of pickle juice in my pack if I suffered cramp.

"2 Aussie girls were chatting away behind me and talking about some of the races that they had recently done. I am sure that they didn't think that I could hear them when one of them pointed out my shoes, which are new to the market. She told her friend that only sponsored athletes have them now, but she was perplexed because I didn't look like an elite."

The timing mat was set right on the entry of the track and I deliberately made sure that I kept a steady pace up the first climb towards Key Summit to get ahead of the masses. Down towards Lake Howden we then had a very pleasant but slippery downhill we then climbed towards the Earland Falls. This view was sensational and because of the recent snowfalls the falls were in full force. Some of the temporary bridges were limited to one person at a time and just after the falls a long que formed while we waited for some hikers coming in the opposite direction. I had memories of the days when you could stand outside a shop in England and automatically a que would form behind you. I took this as an opportunity to pop down a gel and get my heart rate under control.

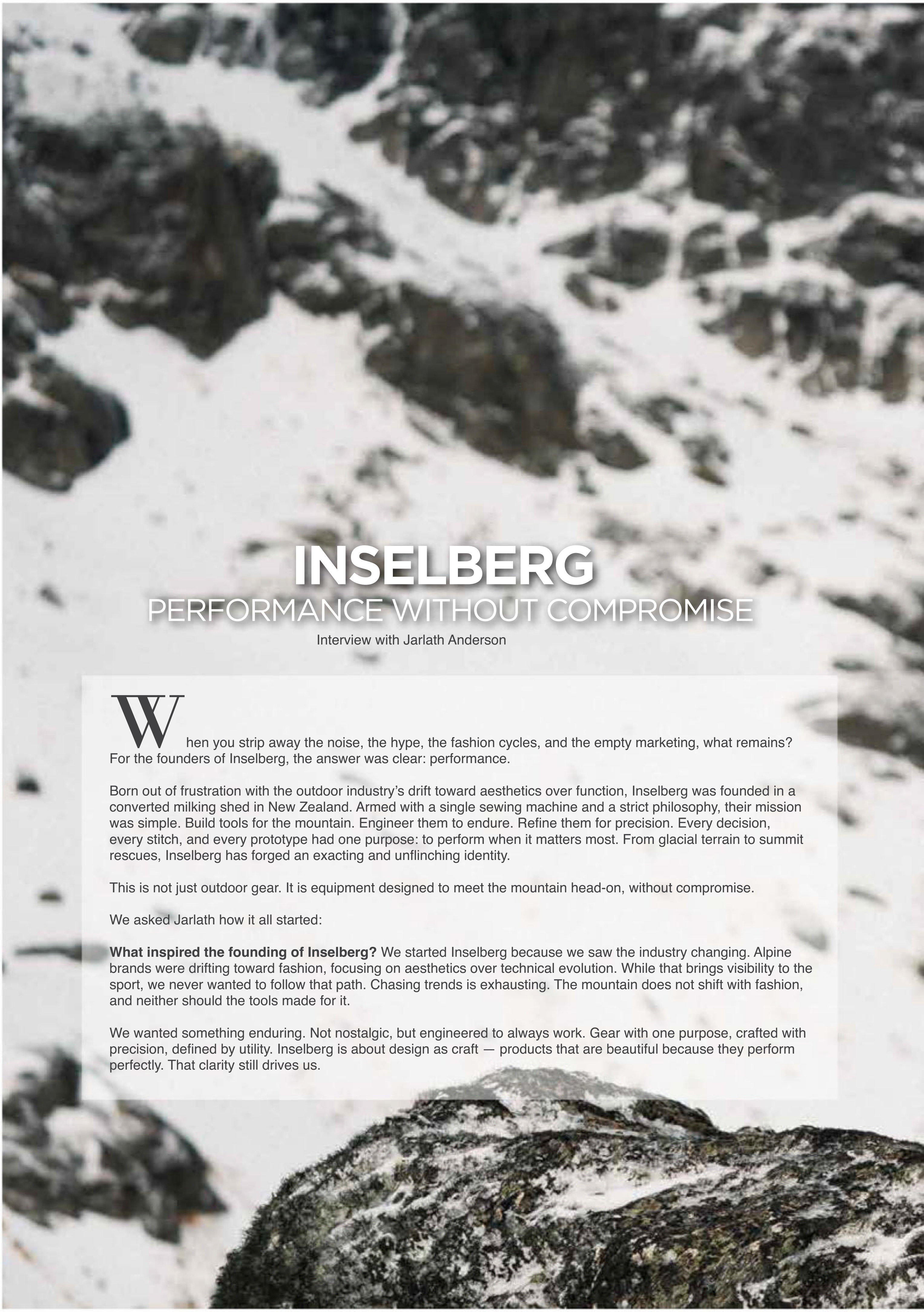
The next section was a rooty section towards Lake Mackenzie and the first aid station. I purposely drank from only on of my flasks so that when we got to the aid station, I only had one to fill. I refilled with water and then launched into the hardest climb up from the Lake to Ocean Peak corner. This was steep and rugged and where the fast walkers excelled. Wattie is a good walker, and I did ready myself for the disappointment of hearing his chatter coming up behind me. I was blown away by the views back down to the lake and had to stop for a quick photo opportunity. There was a group of young school kids having a break at Ocean Peak Corner who were very enthusiastically cheering on us racers. Very cool. I worked on regrouping after the climb and made my way to Harris Saddle.

The next section was where my shoes came to the fore. I had been given a pair of Terrex Trail shoes to try. They were awesome. Grippy soles, tough but lightweight and pliable. I could respond to the varying terrain and harsh rocks. This was the section that I lost ground on last year and this year I felt like a hairy goat as I flew down the mountain. 2 Aussie girls were chatting away behind me and talking about some of the races that they had recently done. I am sure that they didn't think that I could hear them when one of them pointed out my shoes, which are new to the market. She told her friend that only sponsored athletes have them now, but she was perplexed because I didn't look like an elite. Thanks very much!

The descent from the Saddle to the Routeburn Falls Hut is hard, rough going and was quite taxing. We passed a tramper who was going in the opposite direction and took the time to read our names on our race bib and give us each a mention. She said go Nick and then moments later I heard her say Graham-shit Wattie had caught me. He stayed behind me until just before the 2nd and last aid station. I stopped for another photo and thought that he had gone on ahead of me. As it turns out he had a cramp attack and had to search for his cramp stop spray.

I made my way down the more runnable bush track and with the change in terrain cramp started in my toes and then spread to my quads and hamstrings. This had happened last year, so I was well prepared. I had a swig of pickle juice and boof- the cramp was gone. With that problem dealt with the next was the mental game to overcome the slight rises that had turned into alpine ascents. I got into a great rhythm and cruised along at a good clip. A couple of older guys passed me at this stage but there was very little that I could do. With about 2k to go Wattie pulls up beside me. I was gutted and just stopped in a huff. I told him about the old guys ahead and he set off to pursue them, leaving me to lick my wounds. I manged to get myself together and still finish in under 5 hours (with 12 seconds to spare).

We all ran well and celebrated with some nice cold Speights courtesy of Ferg our logistics manager who had made the trip by road. We were showing off how well we had it sorted until we met a couple who had a helicopter picking them up. Talk about one upping. This is a great race that I would happily make an annual event.



INSELBERG

PERFORMANCE WITHOUT COMPROMISE

Interview with Jarlath Anderson

When you strip away the noise, the hype, the fashion cycles, and the empty marketing, what remains? For the founders of Inselberg, the answer was clear: performance.

Born out of frustration with the outdoor industry's drift toward aesthetics over function, Inselberg was founded in a converted milking shed in New Zealand. Armed with a single sewing machine and a strict philosophy, their mission was simple. Build tools for the mountain. Engineer them to endure. Refine them for precision. Every decision, every stitch, and every prototype had one purpose: to perform when it matters most. From glacial terrain to summit rescues, Inselberg has forged an exacting and unflinching identity.

This is not just outdoor gear. It is equipment designed to meet the mountain head-on, without compromise.

We asked Jarlath how it all started:

What inspired the founding of Inselberg? We started Inselberg because we saw the industry changing. Alpine brands were drifting toward fashion, focusing on aesthetics over technical evolution. While that brings visibility to the sport, we never wanted to follow that path. Chasing trends is exhausting. The mountain does not shift with fashion, and neither should the tools made for it.

We wanted something enduring. Not nostalgic, but engineered to always work. Gear with one purpose, crafted with precision, defined by utility. Inselberg is about design as craft — products that are beautiful because they perform perfectly. That clarity still drives us.

Putting the gear to the test on Everest

Founder, Jarlath Anderson

Can you describe the early days in the milking shed? It was the only clean space on the farm. It was not a long-term solution, just a place to get started with one sewing machine. We worked with top factories, ones used by Arc'teryx, Patagonia, and Norrøna, but as a small brand, we struggled to hold their attention. Samples took weeks to arrive.

We realised we had to build it ourselves. That one machine grew into a full studio with laser cutters, taping machines, and bonding gear. It gave us control. We could now produce samples exactly to spec, removing guesswork for factories. More importantly, it allowed real time co-development with alpine professionals. We could build a prototype in 48 hours, get it into the field, and start iterating. On average, we go through 12 to 18 prototypes before production.

We have since moved to a proper office. The shed has returned to milking cows.

What does the name 'Inselberg' mean and how does it reflect your philosophy? An inselberg is a mountain that rises sharply from a flat plain, formed as erosion strips away everything but the hardest rock. What endures is what matters. That is our development philosophy. Strip back everything until only the essential remains. Our gear is built the same way: resilient, focused, and singular in purpose.

Why do you build products with a singular focus? Because the mountain does not care how many features your jacket has. It cares whether your gear performs under pressure and adapts when conditions change. Each product is designed for a specific use with no compromise.

Take skiing. Resort skiers need structure and regulation for a lift-based activity, while ski mountaineers need light weight, breathability, and critical pocket placement. Both involve skis, but the use cases differ, and we design to match those differences.

We care about the one per cent gains. Those margins matter in exposed terrain and variable snowpacks. We refine one product per use case every season.

How does your minimalist design set you apart? For us, minimalism means precision. Every seam and feature is intentional. Fewer components reduce failure points and make repairs easier. Our durability does not come from overbuilding—it comes from focus. This extends across the range. We do not design to fill shelves. We build what is necessary, then refine it. You will not find a big logo on the chest. It sits quietly on the back. The construction and performance should do the talking.

What needs in the market were you trying to fill? Plenty of brands get the basics right. But when you are moving fast in high stakes terrain, the final one percent matters. That is where most gear falls short.

We build for that space. Working with mountain guides and rescue teams, we co-create gear that meets exact needs. This is not about slapping a pro's name on a product. It is about solving real problems with people who live in this gear every day.

How has your work with AMCART refined your gear? This is not a marketing relationship. AMCART defines the requirements. They live in this gear year-round, and they know where it fails and what it needs to do. We build, test, and iterate until the product meets their standards, not ours. That is how you make gear that works in the worst conditions.

What is your two-year design process like? It starts with a specific need. We break that down into technical requirements: movement, load, articulation, and stress. We study real users—how they move, skin, climb, and transition—and build from that.

Every seam and panel is mapped to support mobility and reduce pressure. Then we prototype 12 to 18 times, testing in the field and with video analysis. We Frankenstein pieces together to isolate performance improvements. Then we test bonding, tape integrity, and fabric behaviour in cold and wet. Each phase is handled by a specialist. This is not fashion. It is alpine engineering.

How have your products performed in extreme environments? Places like Everest and Antarctica are unforgiving. With sub-zero temperatures, high winds, and low oxygen, there is no room for error. We do not just test there—we co-develop with people who operate in those extremes.

Mike Hamill and CTSS have helped refine our work on Everest, Denali, and the poles. The Centile Hoody has summited Everest and skied the last degree to both poles. We are now developing a down suit for Everest 2026, tailored for the cold, low-oxygen exertion of high-altitude climbing.

What does 'one purpose, one solution' mean for Inselberg? We do not chase trends or release collections. We build one product for one job, and we make it right.

Everything we do goes toward solving specific problems. There is no fluff or filler—just tools that work. Our gear is co-designed with people who rely on it in real conditions. That focus allows us to refine every element to its highest potential. **www.inselberg.com**

Inselberg’s approach is not just a tagline. It is a complete rejection of the unnecessary. Inselberg is not a brand for those who move fast in terrain where mistakes cost more than pride. It is a toolkit. Quiet, capable, and utterly unforgiving. What comes next may well raise the bar again.

SNOWMOTO NZ:
BACKCOUNTRY SNOW BIKING REVOLUTION

Back in 2018, when most Kiwis were still figuring out what a snow bike even was, Hamish Goodall had already shipped an entire container-load of them across the Pacific. Not for show. Not for a hobby. But to launch what would become the largest snow bike tour operation in the world, right here in the South Island's remote alpine country.

Snowmoto New Zealand isn't your average winter playground. This is a backcountry epic pitched at riders who don't want ski lifts or resort lattes. What they want is altitude, throttle, and untouched terrain. Operating across some of the most visually wild and rugged stations near Queenstown, Wanaka, and Cardrona, Snowmoto has carved out a niche that's got adventure-hungry Aussies and Kiwis booking months ahead.

Hamish's journey to founding Snowmoto started on a North Island farm, fuelled by dirt bikes and the kind of terrain that teaches you real bike control. Years later, a detour to Canada exposed him to snow biking, and that was it. He left with avalanche training, deep backcountry experience across Alberta and BC, and a blueprint for launching something unprecedented back home.

That "something" now includes purpose-built lodges perched at 1565 metres, custom fleet upgrades, and access to private stations across the Old Man, Hector, and Pisa Ranges — terrain you simply can't reach on skis. What started as 100 clients in year one has grown to over 550 in 2024, 80% of them flying in from Australia just to get a taste of snow biking done properly.

And it's not slowing down.

For 2025, Snowmoto is shaking things up again; trialing electric snow bikes (yes, torque without the noise), plus new smaller models like the Kawasaki KLX 300, 230, and even a KLX 110. There's now a kids' ripper track, opening the throttle to anyone from age 6 to 70+. Add in coolant-heated handlebars on the big rigs (no more unreliable electric grips) and an upgraded heated change room for those biting mornings, and it's clear Snowmoto isn't just a tour, it's a full-blown operation.

But the wild is still the drawcard. Snowmoto's overnight expeditions offer two days of serious adventure, miles off-grid, high in the ranges, with helicopter access available and snowcat support tours for families or groups who want the views without the handlebars.

Riders can book anything from short 2-hour blasts at Robrosa, to full-day hauls at Kingston Station, or dive into the deep end with multi-day expeditions that include meals, drinks, and backcountry hut accommodation. Transfers are by road or heli, and all safety gear is provided, including avalanche equipment, with guides trained to the teeth.

Snowmoto is proof that when passion meets purpose, wild things happen. It's not a gimmick or a photo-op. It's a full-throttle invitation to see the Southern Alps in a way few ever will, fast, free, and on a machine that eats snow for breakfast.

For riders who like their winter with more grit and less groomed, this is where the trail begins.

> "Snowmoto New Zealand isn't your average winter playground. This is a backcountry epic pitched at riders who don't want ski lifts or resort lattes. What they want is altitude, throttle, and untouched terrain."

Mānuka Care for Active Lips.

That's It SPF30+ Lip Balm.
Your protective barrier against harsh winter elements.

www.thatsit.nz

THAT'S IT
NEW ZEALAND MADE SKIN PROTECTOR

GIRLS SKI TRIP
CANADIAN ROCKIES • 2026
with MAD About Travel & SheSkisNZ

Join your guide Jill Clendon for two weeks of skiing/boarding, laughs, fun and après at Panorama Mountain Resort and Banff (for Sunshine, Lake Louise and Norquay). All levels and abilities welcome. Come join us in a supportive and fun environment made just for you!

21 FEB – 8 MARCH 2026 / $7739pp

BOOK TODAY!

MAD ABOUT TRAVEL

JILL: 021 782 002
JILLCLENDON@GMAIL.COM
PHIL: 0800 623 872
PHIL@MADABOUTTRAVEL.CO.NZ
WWW.MADABOUTTRAVEL.CO.NZ

SheSkisNZ

SNOWMOTO'S SNOW BIKE TOURS:

TOUR OPTIONS:

Robrosa 2-Hour Thriller: A half-day tour near the SnowFarm in the Cardrona Valley, offering approximately 2 hours of riding.

Full Day Adventure: A comprehensive tour near Kingston Station, near Queenstown, providing around 5 hours of riding, with options for road or helicopter transfers.

Overnight Expedition: An immersive two-day experience that includes two days of riding, meals, drinks, and backcountry hut accommodation.

Snowcat Tours: Guided sightseeing tours in a heated, enclosed vehicle, suitable for families and corporate groups, with options for BBQ lunches or sunset dinners at mountain locations.

BOOKING AND PRICING:

Tours are available from June to October, with prices varying based on the tour type. For example, the Full Day Adventure is priced at NZD $950 per person, while the Overnight Expedition costs NZD $2,099 pp.

SAFETY AND REQUIREMENTS:

A minimum age of 16 is required, and prior motorcycle experience is recommended due to the technical nature of snow biking. Snowmoto provides necessary safety gear, including avalanche equipment.

There is a large range of rental riding equipment and outerwear on site at both locations as well as merchandise to purchase and take with you.

LOGISTICS:

Guests are picked up from designated locations, such as New World in Frankton (near Queenstown), and transported to the riding areas. Depending on the tour, transfers may be by road or optional helicopter. Snowmoto combines adventure, safety, and the stunning landscapes of New Zealand's South Island to offer memorable snow biking experiences for enthusiasts and newcomers alike.

SNOW MOTO
NEW ZEALAND

The only place to ride
SNOWBIKES
in New Zealand

Snowmoto NZ is the largest snow bike tour company in the world with some of the best facilities and access in the back country category offering overnight stays in purpose built accommodation at 1565meters.

www.snowmoto.co.nz

INSULATED JACKETS
YOUR ULTIMATE GUIDE

When it comes to staying warm in the great outdoors, insulation is non-negotiable. For those constantly facing extreme conditions in the mountains, forests, or on expeditions, insulated jackets aren't just a luxury, they're a lifeline. Whether it's a high-altitude ascent, a sub-zero camping trip, or a backcountry ski run, a solid insulated jacket is key to keeping your core temperature stable, protecting your body from the harsh environment around you.

> *"Choosing an insulated jacket isn't a simple task, but it's one that will dramatically impact your outdoor experience."*

TYPES OF INSULATION: DOWN VS SYNTHETIC

Two primary insulation types dominate the outdoor apparel market: down and synthetic. Understanding their differences and the scenarios each excels in will help you make an informed choice.

Down insulation is renowned for its exceptional warmth-to-weight ratio. Down feathers trap air efficiently, offering the highest performance in cold conditions when the jacket is dry. However, down's weakness is its poor performance when wet. When exposed to moisture, down loses its insulating power, becoming flat and ineffective. For dry, cold conditions, such as alpine climbs or frigid mountain expeditions, down insulation offers unparalleled warmth.

Synthetic insulation is built for versatility. While heavier than down, it still provides considerable warmth even when wet, making it an ideal option for unpredictable weather or high-humidity environments. Synthetic fibres are engineered to mimic the structure of down but maintain insulation properties even after exposure to rain or snow. For winter trekking, kayaking in colder conditions, or multi-day hikes where you can't always ensure your gear stays dry, synthetic insulation delivers reliability. The trade-off comes in weight and bulk, which are often greater than down options.

UNDERSTANDING LOFT AND FILL POWER

In insulation, loft refers to the jacket's ability to trap air and create an insulating layer. The higher the loft, the better the insulation. For down jackets, loft is measured in fill power, a number that quantifies the volume of space one ounce (28 grams) of down occupies in cubic inches. Higher fill power, generally in the range of 700 to 900 cubic inches, means better quality down and increased warmth with less weight. If you're looking to minimise bulk and maximise warmth, prioritise high fill power when choosing a down jacket.

Synthetic insulation doesn't have a direct fill power equivalent, but its insulating efficiency can be measured by weight and thickness. Modern synthetic insulations, such as PrimaLoft or Thinsulate, can match down's performance while offering advantages in wet conditions.

WEIGHT AND PACKABILITY

When you're deep into an expedition, every ounce counts. Look for jackets designed with high-performance materials that optimise warmth without ballooning in size.

Some high-end jackets can be packed down to a fraction of their size, fitting into a 15-20 litre pack. Jackets with lightweight shell fabrics such as Pertex Quantum or Gore-Tex Infinium are designed to compress efficiently, allowing for compact storage when not in use. These fabrics protect insulation from environmental exposure without adding substantial weight.

BREATHABILITY AND VENTILATION

An insulated jacket isn't just about trapping heat, it's also about regulating it. Too much warmth can lead to sweating, which can be dangerous in cold conditions. Proper breathability is therefore a critical feature for performance-oriented jackets.

High-performance insulation works best when paired with fabrics that offer moisture-wicking properties. Many jackets come with underarm vents, zippers, or mesh panels that allow you to dump heat quickly when you start working hard. Windproof and waterproof membranes in jacket designs, such as Gore-Tex or eVent, can be a game changer, preventing moisture buildup while still allowing breathability during intense activity.

DURABILITY AND DESIGN FEATURES

Adventure-ready jackets don't just need to keep you warm, they need to endure the wear and tear of the environment. Durability comes from both the quality of the insulation and the outer shell material. Consider jackets made with ripstop fabrics or reinforced panels in high-abrasion areas, such as the elbows or hem, for maximum longevity.

Integrated hoods, adjustable cuffs, and drawcord hems are standard features on high-end insulated jackets. A well-designed hood that fits snugly over a helmet can be crucial in mountaineering or skiing, offering protection without obstructing vision. Additionally, when selecting a jacket, pay attention to the pocket configuration. Key items like your phone, gloves, or maps need to be accessible without disrupting the warmth.

INSULATION MADE FROM 100% POST-CONSUMER RECYCLED PLASTIC BOTTLES.

DOWN ALTERNATIVE KEEPS YOU WARM IN DAMP CONDITIONS AND DRIES QUICKLY.HOODY

PACKS INTO ITS OWN POCKET AS PART OF OUR PACK&GO SOLUTION.

KATHMANDU HELI INSULATED HOODED JACKET

INSULATION FOR DIFFERENT ACTIVITES

Each outdoor pursuit has its own demands, and no jacket excels at everything. Here's how to find the right insulation for your needs:

- **Winter Mountaineering/Alpine Climbing:** For high-altitude environments, a high-fill power down jacket is often the preferred choice. The emphasis here is on light weight and warmth. Expect to see jackets in the 700-900 fill power range.
- **Backcountry Skiing/Snowboarding:** An insulated shell jacket with synthetic fill is often preferred for its balance of warmth, durability, and moisture management. Synthetic insulation also allows for flexibility in movement, which is crucial for active skiing or riding.
- **Hiking/Trekking:** For multi-day hikes, weight and packability become crucial. Look for jackets with moderate synthetic insulation, offering warmth even if it gets wet. Jackets that can be compressed and stowed away are vital when you need to shed weight during warmer conditions.
- **Expedition-Style Adventures:** Extreme cold requires nothing short of the best. Expedition jackets often feature double-layered down or synthetic combinations for optimal warmth, paired with a waterproof shell to combat the harshest conditions.

Selecting Your Jacket

Choosing an insulated jacket isn't a simple task, but it's one that will dramatically impact your outdoor experience. Consider your activity, the environment you'll encounter, and how you'll balance weight, warmth, and moisture management.

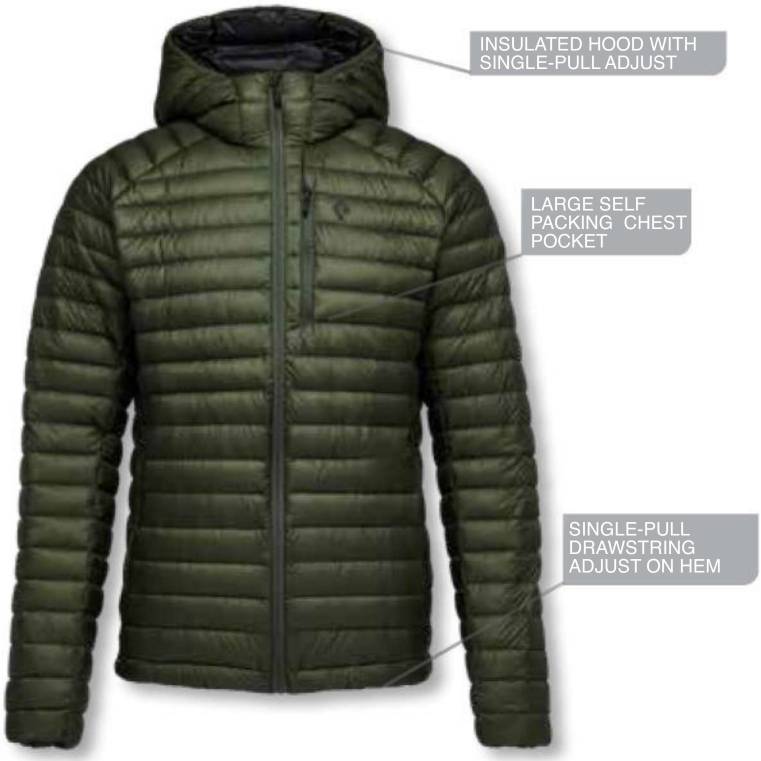
Ultimately, the best jacket is the one that keeps you warm and comfortable while allowing you to perform at your peak. Whether you opt for down's unmatched warmth-to-weight ratio or synthetic's dependability in wet conditions, understanding these key factors will ensure you make the right decision for your next adventure.

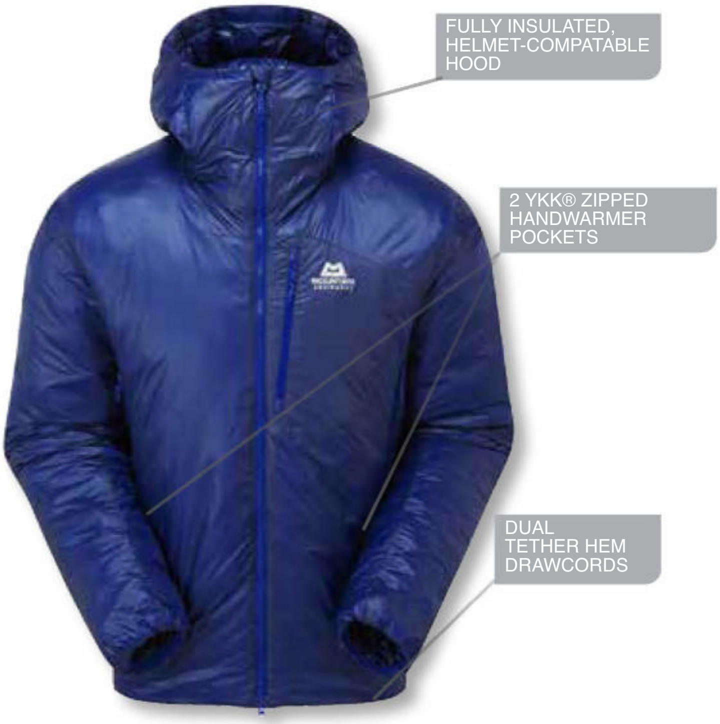
BLACK DIAMOND APPROACH DOWN HOODY WWW.SOUTHERNAPPROACH.CO.NZ

Insulation: Allied HyperDRY goose down
Weight: 303g
Loft: 800 fill power
Design Features: A down layering piece for chilly fall belays, breezy ridgelines and serious expeditions alike, the Approach Down Hoody packs down to nothing and is ready in an instant for dependable alpine-worthy warmth.

- Insulated hood with single-pull drawcord adjust
- YKK Vislon Slim center front zipper for ultimate packability
- Two YKK® zippered hand pockets and zippered chest pocket
- Jacket packs into hand pocket with a carabiner clip loop
- Elastic hood opening and cuffs
- 800-fill, Allied HyperDRY goose down insulation

RRP: $699.99

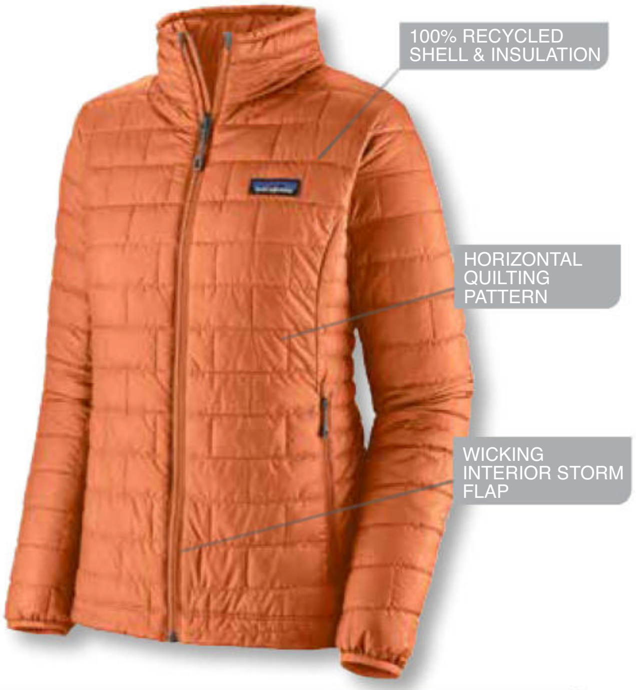

INSULATED HOOD WITH SINGLE-PULL ADJUST
LARGE SELF PACKING CHEST POCKET
SINGLE-PULL DRAWSTRING ADJUST ON HEM


FULLY INSULATED, HELMET-COMPATABLE HOOD
2 YKK® ZIPPED HANDWARMER POCKETS
DUAL TETHER HEM DRAWCORDS

MOUNTAIN EQUIPMENT OREUS HOODED JACKET WWW.OUTDOORACTION.CO.NZ

Insulation: Aetherm™ Precision Insulation
Weight: 390g
Design Features: A ground breaking synthetic insulated jacket for alpine pursuits. Built with Aetherm™ Precision Insulation which provides down-like warmth with the durability and weather resistance of synthetic fill.

Crucially the Oreus Jacket is one of the most versatile pieces of kit you can own, suitable for everything from super alpine climbing in the high mountains to ski touring in the Alps, hill walking in Scotland or rock climbing on high crags. They can be worn as an outer layer, as a super warm mid-layer or thrown over the top of everything as a lightweight belay jacket or vest. The warmth, fast drying performance and low weight and pack size are equally beneficial for almost any activity in the mountains.
RRP: $849.95


100% RECYCLED SHELL & INSULATION
HORIZONTAL QUILTING PATTERN
WICKING INTERIOR STORM FLAP

PATAGONIA WOMEN'S NANO PUFF WWW.PATAGONIA.CO.NZ

Insulation: 60-g PrimaLoft® Gold Insulation Eco 100% postconsumer recycled polyester
Weight: 283g
Loft:700-800 fill power
Design Features: Warm, windproof, water-resistant – the Nano Puff® Jacket uses incredibly lightweight and highly compressible 60-g PrimaLoft® Gold Insulation Eco 100% postconsumer recycled polyester with P.U.R.E.™ (Produced Using Reduced Emissions) technology, wrapped in a 100% recycled polyester shell and lining. Made in a Fair Trade Certified™ factory.
RRP: $319.99

UNIQUE BACK PANNELING FOR INCREASED VENTILATION
SECURE FRONT POCKETS
PACKABLE INTO LEFT POCKET

MERRELL RIDGEVENT HYBRID JACKET WWW.MERRELL.CO.NZ

Insulation: 65% RDS waterproof down and 35% Primaloft Eco Gold
Design Features: Be warm, dry, and responsible. With a matte finish, Teflon water, wind, and rain protection, and DownPlus+ insulation made up of 65% responsibly sourced waterproof goose down and 35% ultrafine Primaloft synthetic fibers, it's your go-to outer layer of protection.

- Backvent construction on back for increased ventilation
- Matte ripstop polyester with Downplus+ Proprietary Hybrid
- 80g insulation everywhere except back panel
- 90g insulation in back panel
- DWR Finish
- 2 secure hand pockets
- Binding at armholes
- Packable into left inner pocket
- Media/device compatible

RRP: $449.00

HELMET-COMPATIBLE HOOD
INNOVATIVE QUILTING CONSTRUCTION
ELASTICISED CUFFS & ADJUSTABLE HEM

PATAGONIA MEN'S MICRO PUFF HOODY WWW.PATAGONIA.CO.NZ

Insulation: 65-g PlumaFill 100% recycled polyester
Weight: 298 g
Design Features: The Micro Puff® Hoody combines ultralight Pertex® Quantum shell fabric with PlumaFill insulation, and the result is the best warmth-to-weight ratio of any jacket we've ever created and the highest compressibility of any of our synthetic jackets. It's your go-to insulation piece for mixed (and possibly miserable) cold conditions. The shell fabric is built with NetPlus® 100% postconsumer recycled nylon ripstop made from recycled fishing nets, and the insulation is 100% recycled polyester. Made in a Fair Trade Certified™ factory..
RRP: $549.99

RAB GLACEON PRO DOWN JACKET WWW.OUTFITTERS.CO.NZ

Insulation: 700FP Recycled Down with Nikwax Fluorocarbon-Free
Weight: 594g (men's med)
Loft: 700 fill power
Design Features: This jacket is the perfect balance of warmth, weight, and packability, ideal for cold conditions. Featuring a protective Pertex® Quantum Pro fabric and filled with 700FP down.

- The lightweight, protective Pertex® Quantum Pro fabric deflects wind and damp conditions.
- High quality 700FP down provides superb warmth for minimal weight.
- Helmet-compatible hood is fully adjustable, with a stiffened peak for added protection.
- Belay-friendly two-way zip with a soft, comfortable chin guard.
- Plenty of storage in the two hand pockets and a hidden chest pocket.
- Cuff adjustment and elastication for optimum fit when wearing gloves.

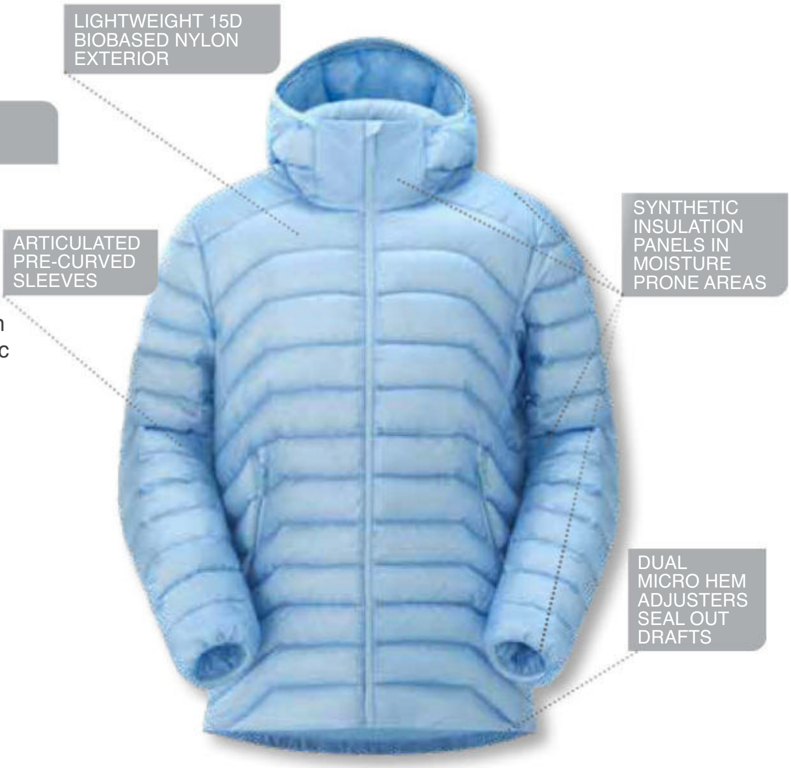
RRP: $529.95

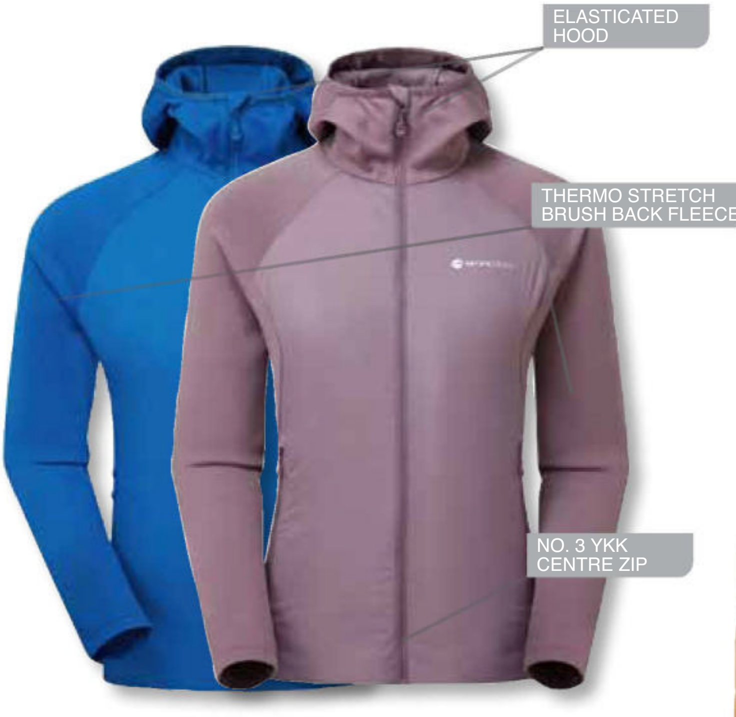
ADJUSTABLE HELMET COMPATIBLE HOOD
BELAY FRIENDLY TWO-WAY ZIP
PLENTY OF POCKET STORAGE

INSELBERG CENTILE HOODY
WWW.INSELBERG.COM

Insulation: Hungarian white goose down plus Climbashield Combat synthetic insulation panels in moisture prone areas.
Weight: 390g (men's lrg)
Loft: 850 fill power
Design Features: The Centile Hoody was developed in collaboration with Everest guides to address the specific challenges of high-altitude climbing. Advanced body mapping places synthetic insulation in areas prone to higher moisture buildup, ensuring warmth in regions most exposed to perspiration and external dampness.

The core and less-exposed areas feature 850 fill power ExpeDRY down, which is enhanced with gold particles. These particles vibrate at a low frequency to actively reduce humidity within the down chambers. This innovation not only helps the down dry faster but also maintains loft over extended use, ensuring consistent thermal performance throughout demanding expeditions.
RRP: $550.00


LIGHTWEIGHT 15D BIOBASED NYLON EXTERIOR
ARTICULATED PRE-CURVED SLEEVES
SYNTHETIC INSULATION PANELS IN MOISTURE PRONE AREAS
DUAL MICRO HEM ADJUSTERS SEAL OUT DRAFTS

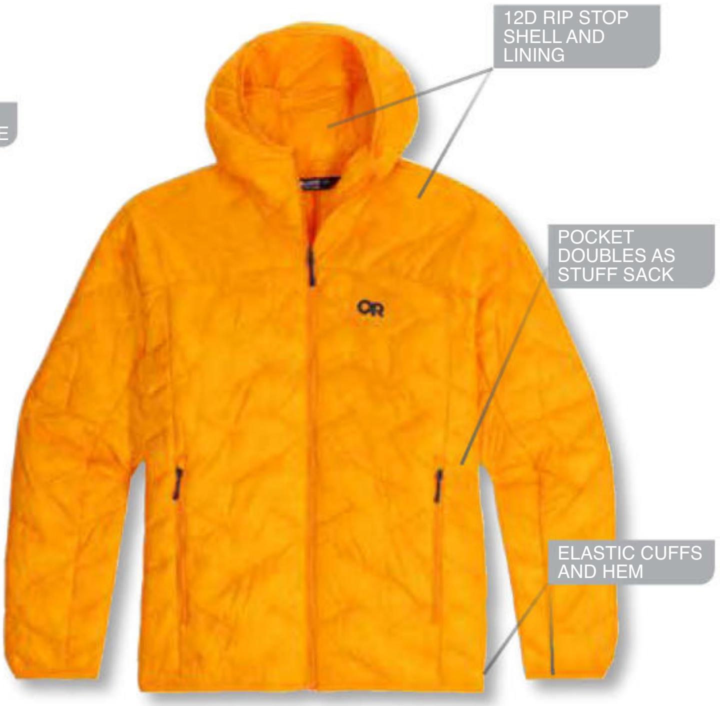

ELASTICATED HOOD
THERMO STRETCH BRUSH BACK FLEECE
NO. 3 YKK CENTRE ZIP

MONTANE MONTANE SIROCCO LITE HOODIE
WWW.FURTHERFASTER.CO.NZ

Insulation: Dynamic Insulation
Weight: 240g (W) and 290g (M),
Design Features: The Sirocco Lite offers active insulation to elevate your fast-paced adventures by keeping you warm while regulating your temperature allowing for unrestricted movement.

This insulated jacket is made from a FEATHERLITE Air fabric with a ripstop outer and low-profile seams providing wind resistance and breathability.The lightweight centre front zip reduces weight and improves layering ability for colder conditions.

Hybrid in design, the Dynamic Insulation provides thermal performance throughout the main body, with THERMO Stretch brush back fleece sleeves for freedom of movement and excellent moisture management.
RRP: $359.00


12D RIP STOP SHELL AND LINING
POCKET DOUBLES AS STUFF SACK
ELASTIC CUFFS AND HEM

OUTDOOR RESEARCH SUPERSTRAND LT HOODIE
WWW.BIVOUAC.CO.NZ

Insulation: VerticalX™ SuperStrand
Weight: 309g (men's med)
Loft:700-800 fill power equivalent
Design Features: Ultralight and packable, features VerticalX™ SuperStrand insulation that is just as soft, light and lofty as 700-800 fill power down thereby giving you the best of both down and synthetic insulations.

Ripstop nylon shell and lining for abrasion, water and wind resistance, a quilting pattern that reduces stitching and creates an uninterrupted flow of warmth and it stows in its own pocket.
RRP: $399.99

ELASTICATED HOOD

YKK FRONT ZIP

FULLY ADJUSTABLE HEM

MONTANE ICARUS HOODED INSULATED JACKET
WWW.FURTHERFASTER.CO.NZ

Insulation: Primaloft® Black 210g
Weight: 550g (men's) 420g (women's)
Design Features: The Montane Icarus Hooded Insulated Jacket is a warm, lightweight synthetic jacket that's ideal for cold or wet mountain conditions.

Made using Recycled Barrier RS Eco 20D Polyester ripstop fabric and innovative 100% Recycled Polyester Primaloft insulation, ensures reliable, durable protection and long-lasting warmth.

A great jacket for adventurers seeking warmth whilst taking on fast-paced adventures in the mountains, including hiking and ski touring.

RRP: $399.00

SCOOBA HOOD

PACKS INTO ITS OWN POCKET FOR STORAGE

ELASTIC BOUND HOOD & CUFFS

KATHMANDU HELI INSULATED HOODED JACKET
WWW.KATHMANDU.CO.NZ

Insulation: Thermore Ecodown Insulation. Insulation made from 100% post-consumer recycled plastic bottles
Weight: 453 g (size M men's) 393.5 g(size M women's)
Loft: 600+ Fill Power
Design Features: Durable Water Repellent (DWR) made without intentionally added PFAS, packs into its own pocket, elastic-bound hood and cuffs to seal out the cold, adjustable hem, zip pockets

The cosy layer that's always up for an adventure – meet the Heli Hooded Jacket. With Thermore Ecodown insulation, this jacket is a warm down alternative that will keep you warm in damp conditions and dry quickly.
It's lightweight, perfect for throwing in your bag for a day around town or on an outdoor mission. Its scuba hood seals out the cold, while the water-repellent finish helps water bead off the surface.
RRP: AU: $219.98 NZ: $239.98

OUTDOOR RESEARCH HELIUM DOWN HOODIE
WWW.BIVOUAC.CO.NZ

Insulation: 100% responsibly sourced 800+ loft goose down
Weight: 460g (men's med)
Loft: 800 fill power
Design Features: Lightweight, durable, abrasion-resistant, 41%-recycled Pertex® Quantum that protects the ultra-warm 800+ fill-power Responsibly Sourced Down. Pertex® Shield with Diamond Fuse fabric adds weather protection to the adjustable hood and shoulders.

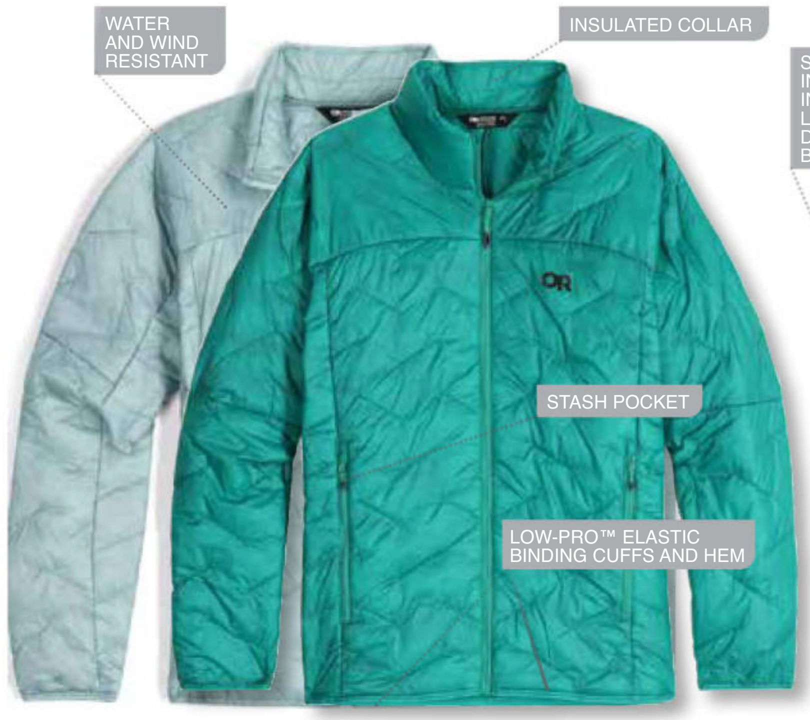
Features include internal stash pockets, the ability to stow the jacket into its left hand pocket and a drawcord hem to keep gusts out.
RRP: $499.99

ADJUSTABLE HOOD

WATERPROOF FABRIC IN KEY AREAS

STASH POCKET

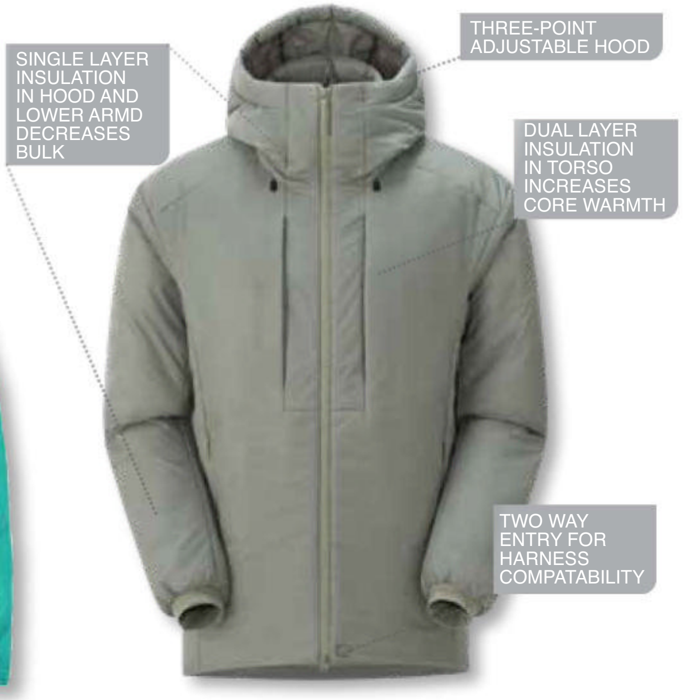
DRAWSTRING HEM


WATER AND WIND RESISTANT
INSULATED COLLAR
STASH POCKET
LOW-PRO™ ELASTIC BINDING CUFFS AND HEM

OUTDOOR RESEARCH SUPERSTRAND LT JACKET
WWW.BIVOUAC.CO.NZ

Insulation: VerticalX™ SuperStrand insulation
Weight: 283g (large)
Loft: 700-800 fill power equivalent
Design Features: Ultralight and packable, features VerticalX™ SuperStrand insulation that is just as soft, light and lofty as 700-800 fill power down thereby giving you the best of both down and synthetic insulations.

Ripstop nylon shell and lining for abrasion, water and wind resistance, a quilting pattern that reduces stitching and creates an uninterrupted flow of warmth and it stows in its own pocket.
RRP: $319.99


SINGLE LAYER INSULATION IN HOOD AND LOWER ARMD DECREASES BULK
THREE-POINT ADJUSTABLE HOOD
DUAL LAYER INSULATION IN TORSO INCREASES CORE WARMTH
TWO WAY ENTRY FOR HARNESS COMPATABILITY

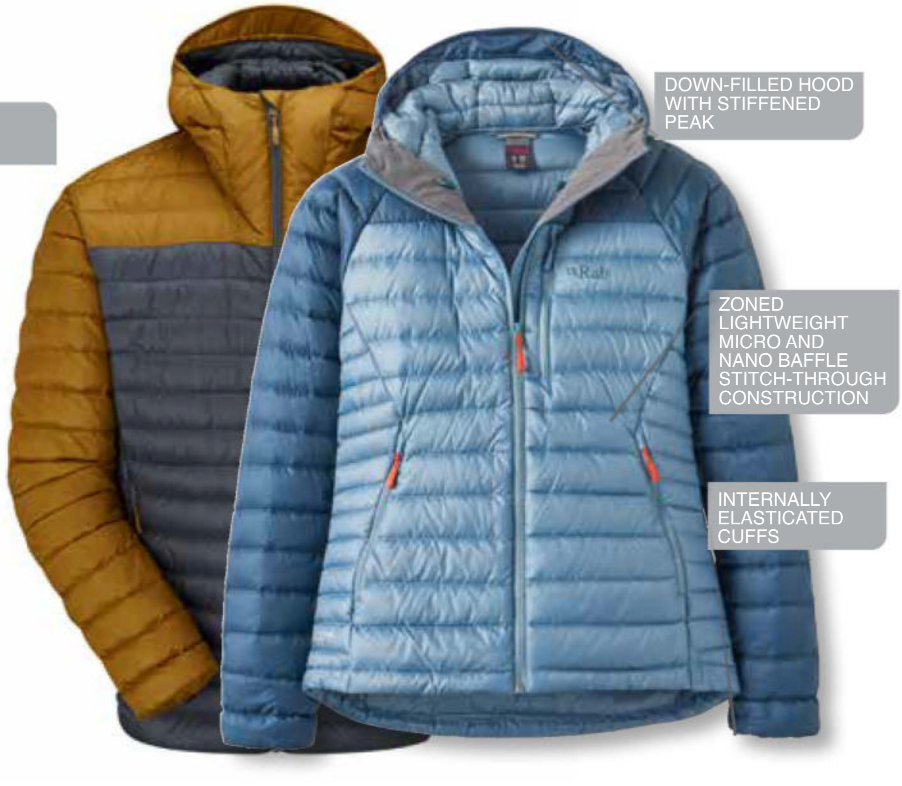
INSELBERG PRISM BELAY JACKET
WWW.INSELBERG.COM

Insulation: 190 gm of Climashield Apex insulation in the body and upper arms, and 90 gm of insulation in the hood, lower and under arms
Weight: 700g (men's lrg)
Design Features: The Prism Belay Jacket is engineered to provide critical warmth and protection during prolonged periods of inactivity on exposed ridges or ledges. Continuous fiber Climashield Apex insulation delivers reliable thermal efficiency and retains loft even after repeated compressions, ensuring performance through repeated packing and deployment.

Composite body mapping enhances functionality by placing dual layers of insulation in the torso for superior core warmth, while single layers in the hood, lower arms, and underarms reduce bulk and improve mobility, allowing for free arm movement during technical tasks.
RRP: $610.00

RAB MICROLIGHT ALPINE JACKET
WWW.OUTFITTERS.CO.NZ

Insulation: Recycled 700 fill-power down Nikwax hydrophobic (water-resistant) finish
Weight: 466.5 g (men's)
Loft: 700 fill power
Design Features: Versatile and packable, this down jacket features a combination of zoned micro and nano baffles to increase core warmth without inflating weight or bulk and is made from 100% recycled down.
RRP: $399.95


DOWN-FILLED HOOD WITH STIFFENED PEAK
ZONED LIGHTWEIGHT MICRO AND NANO BAFFLE STITCH-THROUGH CONSTRUCTION
INTERNALLY ELASTICATED CUFFS

INSELBERG

Designed in **New Zealand** - Tested on **Everest**

CENTILE HOODY

www.inselberg.com

OUTDOOR RESEARCH SNOWCREW JACKET RRP: $549.99

Delivers performance, warmth and style with a 56%-recycled waterproof, breathable shell fabric and 85%-recycled synthetic insulation for a superior warmth-to-weight ratio. Features include an adjustable hood with a wire brim that fits most snow-sport helmets, pit zips for ventilation, a powder skirt to stop snow going up your back, a handy fore-arm ski pass pocket and a double-separating front zip for access and/or venting.

WWW.BIVOUAC.CO.NZ

SALEWA SELLA 3L POWERTEX JACKET WOMENS RRP: $999.90

The lightweight, athletic fit of this jacket is based on ergonomic patterning for good freedom of movement. Featuring an adjustable Helmet compatible hood, direct access avalanche device pocket, zippered chest pocket, detachable snowskirt, zippered underarm ventilation. Fully sealed seams.

Main Material: 3 layer / 40D / PFC Free / Water Column: 20,000 mm/m2/24h. MVTR: 20,000 g/m2/24h

Weight: 580 g M / 510 g W (pictured)

WWW.BOBO.CO.NZ

SALEWA SELLA DURASTRETCH JACKET WOMEN RRP: $439.90

A women's softshell jacket with breathable weather protection. The close-fitting hood and integrated collar fit neatly under your helmet, and the elasticated cuffs and waistline drawcord create a streamlined fit. Wind resistant, Water repellent, Abrasion resistant and 4-way stretch.

Main Material: Durastretch Denim with a PFC Free DWR finish.

Weight: 470 g M / 390 g W (pictured)

WWW.BOBO.CO.NZ

SALEWA SELLA CREVASSE HOODED JACKET MENS RRP: $349.90

This functional hooded mid layer for ski touring, mountaineering, and trekking has a 4-way stretch fleece, a smooth exterior, and its inner grid construction enables both increased thermal warmth and reduced fabric mass. The fabrics open channels improve breathability and help move vapour away from the body.

Main Material: Polarlite Grid.

Weight: 410 g M (pictured) 340 g W

WWW.BOBO.CO.NZ

SALEWA SELLA FREE 3L POWERTEX PANTS MEN RRP: $999.90

Built for the backcountry. Snowsports-specific features include the detachable bib with zip pocket, waistband with snap button and zippered fly, adjustable inner gaiters and anti-cut kick patches for edge and crampon protection, zippered leg ventilation, and a slightly roomier freeride-style cut.

Main Material: 3 layer / 40D / PFC Free / Water Column: 20,000 mm/m2/24h. MVTR: 20,000 g/m2/24h

Weight: 615 g M (pictured) / 565 g W

WWW.BOBO.CO.NZ

OUTDOOR RESEARCH ARETE GORE-TEX MODULAR GLOVES RRP: $249.99

3-in1 gloves built for high-performance cold-weather skiing and climbing. Breathable water and wind-proof outer glove with a GORE-TEX® membrane, low-bulk-but-warm EnduraLoft™ insulation with leather palms and fingers that enhance grip and durability and a removable 300-weight fleece liner glove. Wear either on their own or together, depending on the conditions.

WWW.BIVOUAC.CO.NZ

YETI RANCHERO™27L BACKPACK RRP $475.00

The Easy Access 27L Ranchero™ Backpack is the ultimate companion for those who blur the lines between work and play. This streamlined commuter focuses on access, allowing you to quickly grab your gear without breaking your stride

WWW.NZYETI.COM

SALEWA SELLA 3L POWERTEX PANTS WOMEN RRP: $879.90

A women's lightweight, fully waterproof, windproof & breathable technical hardshell pant. Featuring a waistband with snap button and zippered fly, zippered leg ventilation, two zippered cargo pockets, fixed inner gaiter, water resistant zippers. Regular pant leg fit. Fully sealed seams.

Main Material: 3 layer / 40D / PFC Free / Water Column: 20,000 mm/m2/24h. MVTR: 20,000 g/m2/24h

Weight: 470 g M / 440 g W (pictured)

WWW.BOBO.CO.NZ

BLACK DIAMOND FIRST LIGHT STRETCH HOODY
RRP: $549.99
The First Light Stretch Hoody is the ultimate in dynamic four-season insulation that breathes efficiently and stretches with your every movement, making it the perfect insulating mid-layer for alpine ascents and early morning ski tours.

- Lightweight, stretch lining for added breathability
- Mapped insulation throughout body, shoulders, and arms
- Adjustable, climbing-helmet-compatible hood with drawcord adjustment
- Underarm gussets for added range of motion
- Low-profile, single-adjust hem
- Stows in internal chest pocket with carabiner clip loop
- Two concealed-zip hand pockets

WWW.SOUTHERNAPPROACH.CO.NZ

RAB XENAIR ALPINE LIGHT JACKET
RRP: $399.95
Adaptable, lightweight, and versatile, this synthetic insulated jacket features a body mapped insulation, YKK® zips and articulated sleeves for mobility. Made for start stop activities.
WWW.OUTFITTERS.CO.NZ

INSELBERG PASCAL HOODY
RRP: $320.00
Versatile Polartec® fleece built for movement, breathability, and durability in demanding, high-output conditions.
WWW.INSELBERG.COM

RAB KHROMA FREERIDE GORE-TEX GLOVES
RRP: $339.95
Combining all-weather warmth with premium dexterity and grip to keep you dry and warm. It comes with lightweight hydrophobic PrimaLoft® Gold insulation and reinforced Pittards Armortan® leather palms.
WWW.OUTFITTERS.CO.NZ

INSELBERG INFIMA JACKET RRP: $360.00
Lightweight, breathable alpine jacket with PrimaLoft® insulation and Polartec® panels for high-output movement.
WWW.INSELBERG.COM

INSELBERG HEDRON ANORAK
RRP: $340.00
Double-weave softshell with durable stretch and articulation for efficient, unrestricted movement in alpine terrain.
WWW.INSELBERG.COM

INSELBERG QUINTIC HOODY RRP: $260.00
30D ripstop windshell with streamlined details, low-profile hood, and reliability in fast-changing conditions.
WWW.INSELBERG.COM

THAT'S IT SPF30+ LIP BALM
RRP: $17.50
Give your lips some love when you are on the ski field this winter with our SPF30+ Mānuka Oil Lip Balm. Made in NZ and built to protect your lips against the harsh winter sun. Shop online or find a stockist near you at:
WWW.THATSIT.NZ

INSELBERG ARGAND JACKET RRP: $390.00
Durable alpine softshell with seam sealing for efficient winter layering and performance in severe conditions.
WWW.INSELBERG.COM

INSELBERG GAUSS PANT RRP: $280.00
Lightweight softshell pant with high-stretch double weave for mobility on technical, all-season terrain.
WWW.INSELBERG.COM

Race report editor, Nick Laurie, putting the Terrex through their paces on the Routeburn

"The next section was where my shoes came to the fore. I had been given a pair of Terrex Trail shoes to try. They were awesome. Grippy soles, tough but lightweight and pliable. I could respond to the varying terrain and harsh rocks."

Race Report editor: Nick Laurie

ADIDAS TERREX AGRAVIC SPEED TRAIL RUNNING SHOES

Reviewed by Eric Skilling

A lot of thought has gone into this shoe. I assessed a pair on a 12-kilometre course with a mix of everything: grass, beach sand, rock, gravel, bush trail, boardwalk, and tar seal. While there are always compromises, I finished the trail impressed and inspired to get out in them again.

At less than 300g, these shoes are stunningly lightweight. My first thought was that this would compromise the fit. However, two strips of elastic attached to the tongue, roughly 70mm wide, and a 100mm lace-up section keep the shoe snug against the instep.

The wide-spaced mesh on the top and sides contributes significantly to the shoe's lightweight and breathable features. It also makes them porous. I misjudged the tides on my trip, and being caught by a single wave was enough to soak my feet with salt water. Fortunately, the design and mesh fabric allows water to escape almost as quickly as it enters, leaving my feet just damp after a few kilometres. I did not cross any streams, but this feature will appeal to those who do.

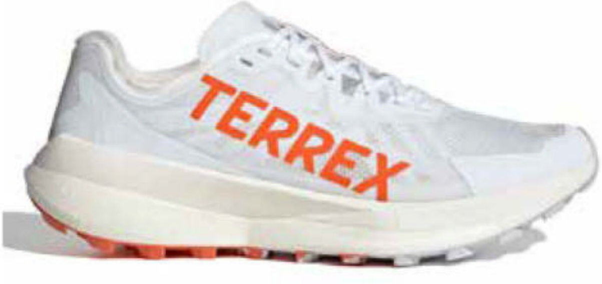
Boulder hopping was a thrill. Even with soles liberally coated in wet sand, I never felt the grip would fail. Personally, this was the most impressive feature of the shoe. Confidence running across rocks is a big part of making trail running enjoyable.

Cushioning is high on the list for most of us, especially those who suffer some level of supination. The “Lightstrike” branded product used by Adidas is top class and worked well on the boardwalk and road sections.

White? Come-on folks. White is fashionable, but not for trail runners, surely?

Despite the early soaking, I finished the trail without any hotspots. Well-designed and comfortable, this shoe performs both on and off road. Even if they need a wash before I go out again.

"Boulder hopping was a thrill. Even with soles liberally coated in wet sand, I never felt the grip would fail."



TERREX
TERREX
TERREX

TACTICAL DESIGNS 4 POINT INSTEP CRAMPON (W/CASE)

***RRP: $39.95**

Secure ultimate grip on icy terrain with this lightweight, 4-point rear crampon - quick to fit, ultra-durable stainless steel, compact, and includes a carry case.

NEXTOOL FLAGSHIP PRO

***RRP: $149.95**

16 tools in one rugged stainless steel multitool - includes pliers, saw, knife, screwdriver, scissors, and more. Compact, durable, and ready for any adventure or repair.

WILD COUNTRY CLIMBING SYNCRO HELMET

***RRP: $199.95**

Lightweight, durable, and highly ventilated - this all-mountain climbing helmet offers full head coverage, a secure fit, and headlamp clips for high-altitude and technical routes.

EXTREMITIES EVOLUTION WATERPROOF GLOVE

***RRP: $119.95**

Versatile and waterproof, these lightweight gloves feature GORE-TEX INFINIUM™ WINDSTOPPER®, touchscreen compatibility, and grippy palms - perfect for high-output adventures in changing conditions.

BRUNTON ECHO® ZOOM MONOCULAR

***RRP: $119.95**

Compact and powerful, this 10-30x zoom monocular delivers sharp views on the go - lightweight, fog-proof, and rubber-coated for rugged, all-weather outdoor use.

XTORM XTREME RUGGED POWER BANK 20.000MAH

***RRP: $199.95**

Built tough for adventure - this 20,000mAh power bank is water, dust, and drop-resistant, with fast charging, dual outputs, and a built-in flashlight for all conditions.

MOUNTAIN EQUIPMENT FANG 42+ BACKPACK

***RRP: $429.00**

Built for big mountain missions - this 42L pack is lightweight, tough, and streamlined with ice axe storage, gear loops, and a close-fit harness for alpine precision.

MOUNTAIN EQUIPMENT ICELINE SLEEPING BAG (-30°C/-22°F)

***RRP: $1699.00**

Engineered for extreme cold, this high-performance down bag offers exceptional warmth-to-weight, waterproof protection, and a close Alpine fit - trusted by serious mountaineers and winter explorers.

MOUNTAIN EQUIPMENT AEROSTAT DOWN 7.0 ULTRA MAT WIDE REGULAR (R5.0)

***RRP: $479.00**

Sleep warmer in the wild - ultralight, down-insulated mat with durable construction, rapid inflation, and premium comfort for cold-weather adventures. Extra-wide for roomier, restful nights.

outdoor action

*prices are subject to change

Find the full product range online at www.outdooraction.co.nz
Follow us on Instagram and Facebook @outdooractionnz

FEED YOUR ADDICTION

Like a 'perfect storm', we have seen a dramatic growth and development in online stores over the past 5 years.

We are dedicating these pages to our client's online stores; some you will be able to buy from, some you will be able drool over. Buy, compare, research and prepare, these online stores are a great way to feed your adventure addiction.

outdoor action

The best outdoor equipment for all of your adventurous antics. Outdoor Action has you sorted.
www.outdooraction.co.nz

KEA OUTDOORS

GEAR YOU CAN TRUST
WHEN IT'S NEEDED MOST...

ADVENTURES START HERE

WWW.KEAOUTDOORS.COM

Timberland

Shop men's, women's, and kids' boots, shoes, and clothing at Timberland NZ official online store.
www.timberland.co.nz

SMALL PLANET QUEENSTOWN

Full-service outfitter selling hiking, climbing and mountaineering gear and apparel, as well as offering equipment rental.
Specialising in Freeride and Touring ski equipment; skis, bindings, skins, outerwear, avalanche safety gear, boots & custom bootfitting.
www.smallplanetsports.com

THE ALPINE CENTRE

The place to go for all the gear you need whether you're skiing, snowboarding, hiking, biking or just exploring.
www.thealpinecentre.co.nz

THAT'S IT.

Epic skin protection for the naturally adventurous
www.thatsit.nz

OUTFITTERS
GEAR FOR OUTDOORS & TRAVEL

Stocking an extensive range of global outdoor adventure brands for your next big adventure. See them for travel, tramping, trekking, alpine and lifestyle clothing and gear.
www.outfittersstore.nz

equipOUTDOORS

Specialists in the sale of Outdoor Camping Equipment, RV, Tramping & Travel Gear. Camping Tents, Adventure Tents, Packs, Sleeping Bags and more.
www.equipoutdoors.co.nz

WHAKATŌ RĀKAU KOTAHI
PLANT ONE TREE
ADVENTURE MAGAZINE

For every copy of adventure magazine purchased, we will plant one native tree.
www.pacificmedia-shop.co.nz

BOBO PRODUCTS

Bobo Products, a leading importer and distributor of snow and outdoor products in New Zealand.
www.bobo.co.nz

YETI®

Our ultra-durable coolers, drinkware and bags are the pinnacle of performance and built for your next adventure.
www.nz.yeti.com

wildside
for travel less ordinary

Amazing holidays for active people and those who seek 'travel less ordinary'. **www.wildsidetravel.co.nz**

bivouac/outdoor
COMMITTED TO ADVENTURE

Bivouac Outdoor stock the latest in quality outdoor clothing, footwear and equipment from the best brands across New Zealand & the globe.
www.bivouac.co.nz

Living Simply
Outdoor clothing & equipment specialists
Newmarket's Original Outdoor Store

100% New Zealand owned & operated independent outdoor clothing and equipment specialty retail shop.
www.livingsimply.co.nz

SUPPSNZ

Top NZ made health supplements delivered straight to your door, with same day dispatch.
www.supps.nz

ALPINE RECREATION
TREK | CLIMB | SKI

This small, friendly family-run company is based in Lake Tekapo, New Zealand, specializing in guided outdoor adventures throughout New Zealand's Southern Alps.
www.alpinerecreation.com

RaD CAR HIRE™
Pay Less - Experience More

With 22 locations around NZ we're one of the largest car rental networks in the country.
www.rad.co.nz

Real Meals™
FREEZE DRIED

Freeze dried food for adventurers.
www.realmeals.co.nz

MAD ABOUT TRAVEL
MOUNTAIN • ADVENTURE • DIVE

Your adventure travel specialists, with over 20 years experience! They live what they sell.
www.madabouttravel.co.nz

Kathmandu®

Kathmandu offers a premium range of outdoor clothing, footwear, accessories and gear for every adventure.
www.kathmandu.co.nz

NORTHERN ROCKS

NZ world class climbing centre. Your climbing experience is at the heart of what they do. They provide trained and competent professionals that are psyched on climbing and passionate about supporting others.
www.northernrocks.co.nz

INSELBERG

Precision-engineered gear for the most demanding alpine and climbing environments.
www.inselberg.com

James "Billy" Watson at Papatura Island

SURFNG GOLD IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS:

Words by Mike Parker Brown
Images supplied by Solomon Islands Tourism

While the Solomon Islands' has a reputation for world class diving, from the months of November to April when the northern Pacific swells sweep in having done their dash with Hawaii, the destination's extensive reefs and north-western facing islands come alive with some of the most perfect – and best of all uncrowded – waves to be found anywhere on the planet.

While the two best-known regions are currently Gizo in the Western Province and Santa Isabel Province, and to a lesser extent, the Florida Islands and North Malaita – there are still literally dozens of secret spots throughout this archipelago of 992 islands, the locations of which are closely guarded by a handful of hard travelling board riders.

Perhaps the most easily reached region is Gizo with daily Solomon Airlines' Dash-8 and Twin Otter flights from Honiara to the Nusa Tupe airstrip. The area offers surfers a good choice of accommodation from village homestays to eco-lodges, hotels and resorts. The Hotel

Gizo is also a popular hang for surfers. Across the water from Gizo lie Fatboys and Sanbis Resort, perfect for those seeking a touch of real comfort complete with hot water, ensuites, a gourmet kitchen, a fantastic bar – even Wi-Fi. As for the waves, a few minutes by boat from Gizo township is Palonggi, a long, shallow right that's well exposed to swell. It works best on bigger swells when the wave's sections join up and it can get hollow.

Palonggi breaks in front of a village where a handful of friendly local surfers reside and have helped set up a beachside home stay. But surfers beware of the reef – many an unwary surfer has come a cropper at Palonggi with many departing the country wearing what the locals laughingly call a Palonggi tattoo aka nasty coral cuts.

For those who like to go left, nearby Titiana's is a goofy's paradise, again a long shallow ride which when showing a bit of size allows surfers to loop through section after section with an easy paddle back. Truth be told Gizo is not the best place for beginners – you need to know what you are doing.

While Gizo area offers some great breaks – and when the swell is running breaks pop up all over the area – a great place to visit, stay and surf is Zipolo Habu on remote Lola Island in the heart of the Vono Vono Lagoon. The name means 'good luck fishing'. Nearby Skull Island, which living up to its name is the resting place for ancient warrior chiefs' skulls and those of their vanquished foes, has the Solomon Islands longest right hander. 'Desperates', a very shallow but flippant, hollow right hander is also here.

Local surf legend has it that Kelly Slater and Mick Fanning have surfed this wave but no one is really sure if they actually did – still, it makes for a good yarn.

"The great thing about surfing in the West is that many of the waves just waiting to be ridden have no name – and with reefs abounding all it takes is a slightly different wind direction, a shift in tide and suddenly a world class break will begin to pump."

Surfing alone Papatura Island - Santa Isabel

Papatura
island retreat

Surfing Papatura Island - Santa Isabel - Solomon Islands

"With just 28,000 international visitors a year, and literally only a couple of hundred of that number being surfers, the Solomon Islands is a very long way from being discovered by the crowds."

Lola Island is a 40-minute boat ride from Munda Station which Solomon Airlines services twice every day with its Dash 8 aircraft, so plenty of room for boards but packing a Mal can pose a few problems.

The great thing about surfing in the West is that many of the waves just waiting to be ridden have no name – and with reefs abounding all it takes is a slightly different wind direction, a shift in tide and suddenly a world class break will begin to pump. But sometimes you just have to be there on the day. Or as surfers are renowned for saying "you should have been here yesterday."

To Malaita and the Solwata surf camp located in the heart of spectacular Lau lagoon and home to a dozen world class reef set ups offering opportunity for all surfing levels and styles.

Maravagi in the Florida islands, an hour's boat ride from Honiara, is home to an isolated small and very clean A-frame, the original name of which has been lost in time and is now simply known as 'Spikey's' after the last 'Manepura' (white man) to surf this area five years ago – yes, the Solomon Islands is actually one of the few places on the planet where you still have naming rights.

To the jewel in the crown, Santa Isabel Province and Papatura Island Retreat, one of the best surfing set-ups to be found anywhere in the South Pacific.

Managed by Australian expats Pete and Margie Blanche, Papatura sits on a beautiful sandy beach facing the main island of Santa Isabel, and is protected from the ocean winds. On the seaward side of the island sit several good surf breaks including Anchovies, PT's, Kumma's, Zoli's, Donuts and Tarzan's, the latter offering a perfect A-frame with barrels going in both directions.

There are several more breaks around the reef directly outside Papatura and each one will have its day depending on winds, swell direction and tides.

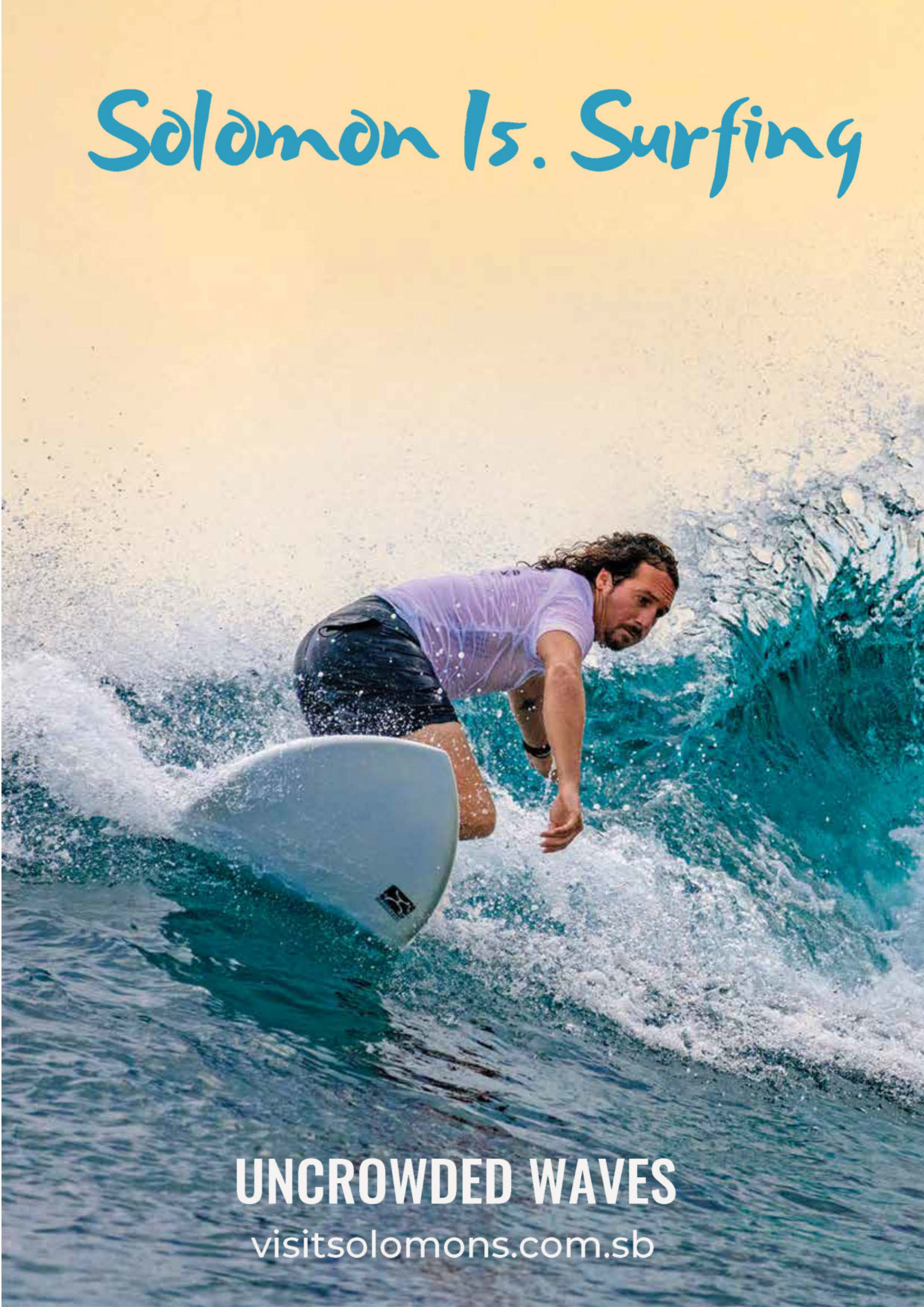
The journey to Papatura is worth the effort – Twin Otter flights to the grass strip at Suavanao and a five-minute boat ride to Papatura Faa Island and the retreat. Mal riders be advised getting anything over 7' on a twin Otter is difficult but don't worry, the retreat offers its guests a huge range of surfboards from stubby nosed fish, a good selection of standard boards through to rhino chasers and a selection of Mals.

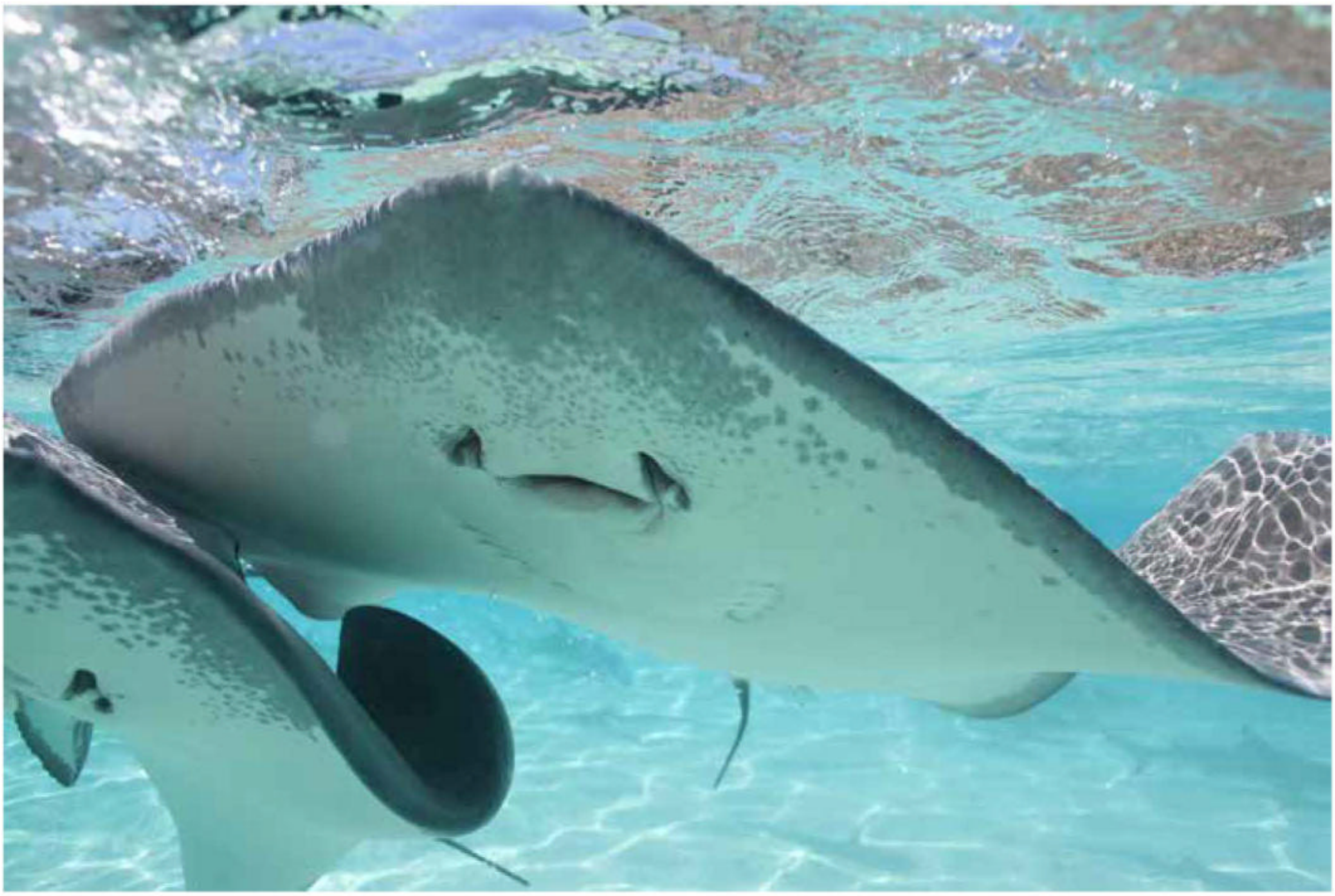
Best of all, Papatura Island retreat limits the number of boardriders to a max of 14 at any one time – so with more than 20 different breaks to choose from, you're guaranteed an uncrowded surf.

One piece of exciting news – a new surf resort has recently been opened on Na Finua Island in Makira-Ulawa Province. Offering two surf breaks right in front of the resort's three bungalows and countless nearby waves, Na Finua Island, alike Papatura Island Retreat, tops the maximum numbers of surfers allowed any one time at is 18.

With just 28,000 international visitors a year, and literally only a couple of hundred of that number being surfers, the Solomon Islands is a very long way from being discovered by the crowds – inevitably as the word slowly gets out, things will change but so far so good - they haven't. So now is definitely the time to go.

For more information on visiting the Solomon Islands visit **www.visitsolomons.com.sb.**


Solomon Is. Surfing
UNCROWDED WAVES
visitsolomons.com.sb



Up close and personal with the stingray

Image by Grégoire Le Bacon

MOOREA:

THE WILD HEARTBEAT OF TAHITI

Just a 30-minute ferry ride from Tahiti's capital, Moorea rises from the sea like a sculpted in basalt. Its name means yellow lizard in Tahitian legend—though these days it's more famous for its shark-tooth mountains, lush interiors, and lagoon so clear it could make glass jealous. Moorea is where the action lives—not the tourist trap kind, but the raw, salt-sprayed, heart-in-your-throat type. Here are five reasons to ditch the pool lounger.

Stingray Feeding in the Lagoon – Not Your Average Handshake

You're waist-deep in Moorea's warm lagoon, when out of the blue, something smooth and silent brushes past your legs. It's a stingray—dozens of them, gliding like ghosts in the shallows, looking for a snack and a scratch behind the… gills? These gentle creatures gather daily just offshore for guided feeding sessions. It's thrilling, humbling, and slightly surreal—like shaking hands with a pancake that's alive and curious. You'll also meet blacktip reef sharks in the area. It's safe, it's wild, and it's a direct handshake with the sea.

Pedal-Powered Adventure – Bike Moorea's Coast and Heart

Moorea's ring road is 60km of pure postcard, and cycling it is the best way to feel every twist of coast and whiff of tiare flower. Rent an e-bike or a mountain bike and go rogue. Hit Belvedere Lookout for panoramic views over Cook's Bay and Opunohu Bay—bonus points if your thighs still work at the top. Stop at roadside fruit stalls, beaches with no names, and locals selling coconut ice cream from the boot of their car.

Diving in Moorea

Diving here is about immersion in one of the Pacific's most untamed big fish arenas. Drop below the surface and you're instantly in a world where visibility stretches 30 metres, and the reef drops off like a cliff into the abyss. Expect dramatic coral canyons, vibrant reef walls, and encounters with sea turtles, moray eels, and the island's iconic lemon sharks. Moorea's dive sites are wild but accessible, perfect for both newly certified divers and seasoned aquanauts chasing pelagic sightings. And with the chance to drift dive alongside eagle rays or hover in blue water while humpbacks sing in the distance.

Humpback whales - Image by Frédérique Legrand

> *"This island is a living, breathing playground carved by volcanoes and polished by saltwater, where every turn leads to another thrill."*

Image by David Kirkland

Moorea Blue Dream

Humpback Whale Watching – Giants in the Blue
From July to November, Moorea becomes a front-row seat to one of the ocean's greatest shows. Humpback whales migrate from Antarctica to calve and nurse in these warm waters. This isn't a boat-around-and-hope-for-the-best situation, Moorea is one of the few places in the world where you can legally snorkel alongside these 40-ton wanderers. With expert guides, you'll float silently in the blue, heart pounding, as these marine monoliths cruise past. It's not spiritual, it's electric. Like watching a bus swim.

Private Lagoon Adventure - Moorea Blue Dream
Explore the turquoise waters of French Polynesia with Moorea Blue Dream, a boutique cruising experience built for explorers who prefer the freedom of the ocean without the crowds. This private charter boat, ideal for up to seven guests, offers the ultimate way to discover Moorea's legendary lagoons on your terms. Swim with rays, drift over coral gardens, toast a birthday under the sun, or just chase the breeze, no set routes, no packed itineraries, just pure Polynesian magic. With your own skipper-concierge at the helm, everything from spontaneous snorkelling to a sunset champagne cruise can be part of the plan. www.mooreabluedream.com

Fishing in Moorea
This isn't your lazy-line-off-the-dock kind of deal—it's offshore warfare with some of the ocean's most formidable fighters. Just minutes from shore, the seafloor drops off into deep blue trenches, putting you right in the strike zone for mahi-mahi, yellowfin tuna, wahoo, and the mighty blue marlin. Local charters run fast and fierce, with captains who know these waters like the back of their sun-beaten hands.

Moorea isn't just a scenic stop on your Tahitian itinerary, it's where the adventure kicks in. This island is a living, breathing playground carved by volcanoes and polished by saltwater, where every turn leads to another thrill. Whether you're boating over coral gardens, free-floating beside a whale the size of a bus, or tearing up jungle trails, Moorea delivers the kind of rush you don't pack away when you leave.

This is the island where your comfort zone gets left on the ferry. Where nature isn't filtered or fenced off. I recall a tourism asking a guide if the stingrays had had their barbs remove, he smiled and didn't answer, these adventures are soft but raw, and it reminds you why you need to step away from the pool and explore.

AIR TAHITI NUI
For an authentic Tahitian welcome to paradise
AUCKLAND - TAHITI - LOS ANGELES - SEATTLE - PARIS - TOKYO
nz.airtahitinui.com

© Danee Hazama

Captain Tama's
LAGOON CRUIZES
RAROTONGA, COOK ISLANDS

SINCE 1992
No.1 Under the Sun

Glass Bottom Boats

Great Snorkelling
Fresh Fish BBQ
Entertainment
Awesome Day Out

Book Online **www.captaintamas.com**

Mighty Mahi Mahi -image David Kirkland

FISHING IN RAROTONGA:

WHERE BIG STORIES COME TRUE

Images supplied by Cook Island Tourism

If you've got salt in your blood and a rod in your hand, the Cook Islands might just be the South Pacific's most underrated playground. Here, the fish are wild, the guides are passionate, and the options are endless. From deep-sea battles with yellowfin to barefoot fly casting for bonefish in a lagoon so clear it looks photoshopped, this is where big fish stories actually come true.

You don't need a license on Rarotonga, and you won't get bogged down in red tape—just be respectful of the local rāhui zones (clearly marked marine reserves), and you're good to go. Bring your own rod, and you can cast off the reef near Trader Jack's, fish the Avana Passage, or flick poppers at GTs from Arorangi Wharf. Prefer someone else to steer the boat and fillet the catch? Charter options are thick on the ground, especially around Avatiu Harbour.

Rarotonga's deep water drops off fast, which means you're hunting big pelagics just minutes from shore. Most charters here troll for wahoo, mahi mahi, tuna and marlin, but if you're after something gnarlier—like GTs or spearfishing in open water—you'll find a crew willing to make it happen. Just ask. Night fishing's also on the menu for those who don't mind a little mystery in their mission.

Over on Aitutaki, it's another world entirely. This place is a mecca for fly fishers chasing the mythical bonefish—silver bullets that cruise the flats with attitude. You can wade, drift, or paddle out, but you'll want a local guide if you're serious about results. They know the tides, the channels, and the fish like old friends. Spearos also get their share here, with lagoon tours for beginners and deeper drops for those chasing dogtooth or 'cuda. Just bring your own kit, minus the weights—most outfits have those covered.

Yellowfin Tuna
www.cookislandspocketguide.com

Fish are the main source of food in Rarotonga - Image by Dylan Harrison

Locals fishing in the sunset image David Kirkland

"Whether you're trolling the bluewater, dropping jigs over reef ledges, casting at crashing bait balls, or going full primal with a speargun in hand, the Cook Islands offer up one of the most diverse fisheries in the South Pacific."

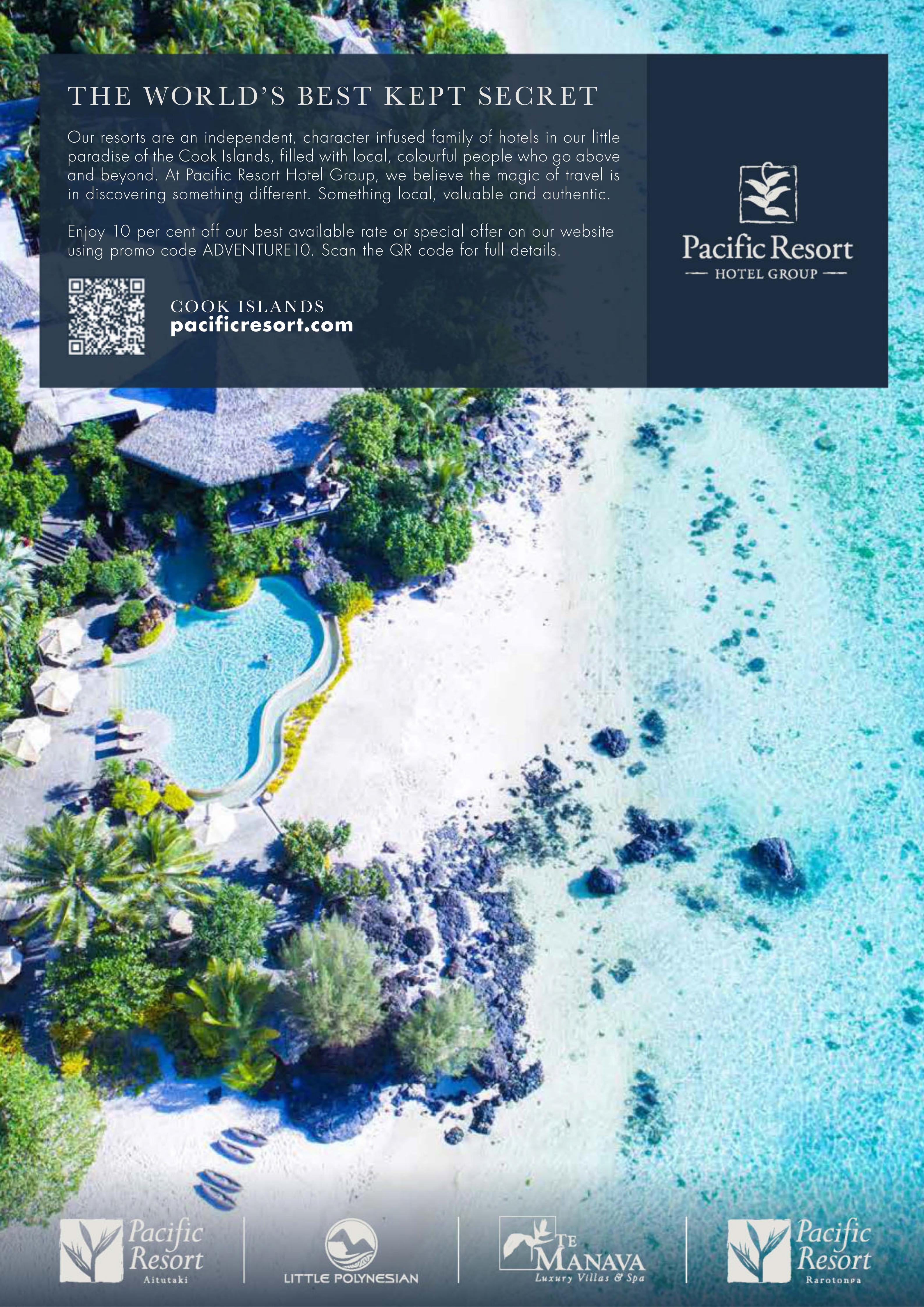
Atiu, the quieter cousin in this trio, keeps things raw and authentic. You can head out reef fishing by day or night, join a local family who've fished these waters for generations, and maybe even swing out to uninhabited Takutea if the weather plays nice. No fancy charter offices here—just word of mouth and a firm handshake at the wharf come morning. That's how it rolls in the Pa Enua, the outer islands. There are no brochures, no online bookings, and no guarantees. But if you're the sort of person who packs a rod just in case and can strike up a conversation over a bait bucket, you'll find someone to take you out. By tomorrow, you'll be chasing fish with someone's uncle who's been doing it since before you could walk.

And the fish? They're all here. Yellowfin, skipjack, dogtooth, wahoo, mahi mahi, marlin (blue, black, and striped), Pacific barracuda, sailfish, GTs, and those legendary bonefish. They're not seasonal fly-bys either—most of them stick around year-round thanks to the warm tropical waters. That said, there are peak times for the serious trophy hunters: yellowfin pop off from October to May, GTs from late spring through to autumn, and wahoo run strong May through September. Mahi? They'll smash your gear from September into early autumn. And if it's blue marlin you're chasing, aim for November through April.

Whether you're trolling the bluewater, dropping jigs over reef ledges, casting at crashing bait balls, or going full primal with a speargun in hand, the Cook Islands offer up one of the most diverse fisheries in the South Pacific. And best of all, it's not locked behind gates or glossy brochures. You don't have to be rich, just keen. Show up, shake hands, and fish like you mean it.

Fishing Aitutaki - image David Kirkland

Bone fish - image David Kirkland



THE WORLD'S BEST KEPT SECRET

Our resorts are an independent, character infused family of hotels in our little paradise of the Cook Islands, filled with local, colourful people who go above and beyond. At Pacific Resort Hotel Group, we believe the magic of travel is in discovering something different. Something local, valuable and authentic.

Enjoy 10 per cent off our best available rate or special offer on our website using promo code ADVENTURE10. Scan the QR code for full details.

COOK ISLANDS
pacificresort.com

Pacific Resort
HOTEL GROUP

Pacific Resort
Aitutaki

LITTLE POLYNESIAN

TE MANAVA
Luxury Villas & Spa

Pacific Resort
Rarotonga

NUKUBATI:

FIJI'S UNTAMED BLUE HEARTBEAT

Words by Steve Dickinson - Images supplied

There's secluded, and then there's Nukubati. A speck of green and gold flung off the northern coast of Vanua Levu, this private island doesn't just tick the "paradise" boxes—it scribbles all over the margins with style, substance, and soul. White sand, bungalows on the beach, and warm Fijian smiles are just the surface gloss. What lies beneath—literally and philosophically—sets Nukubati apart. This isn't a cookie-cutter luxury island. It's a living, breathing testament to how tourism can be done right.

Walk barefoot here, and you're walking through a 30-year vision—a wild dream quietly realised by Jenny and Peter Bourke. They weren't just building a resort; they were planting a flag for regenerative tourism before the term even hit travel brochures. Back when the rest of the world was still busy stuffing plastic straws into coconuts, Nukubati was quietly powering itself with Fiji's first-ever solar plant—designed by Peter, who swapped suits for solar cells and went all-in on off-grid living. Think desalination via sun, hot showers courtesy of solar tubes, UV-treated water, and gardens lush with the help of reclaimed greywater. Here, sustainability isn't a marketing checkbox—it's the foundation, the roof, and the garden in between.

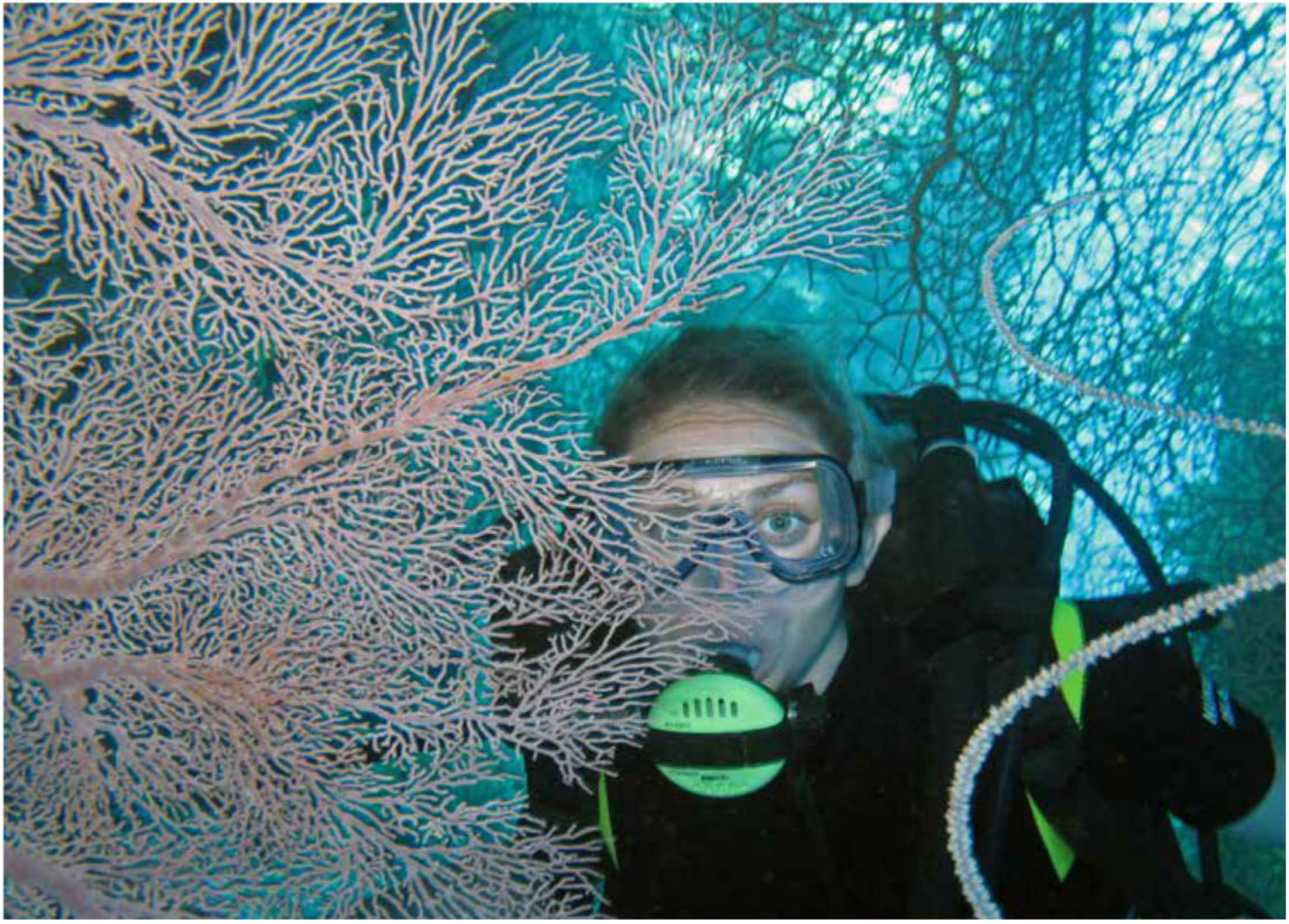
And then there's Jenny. The heart of Nukubati. A woman who disarms with charm, then galvanises with grit. She's part island mum, part quiet revolutionary. Her connection to the land and its people pulses through every aspect of the resort. Staff don't work for her—they work with her. Some have been walking beside her since the resort's beginning, and their deep, familial pride shows in every song, every plate of food, every "bula" that isn't just a greeting—it's a welcome to a way of life.

Nukubati isn't just a testimony to what can be done on land; there is literally a whole ocean waiting to be explored. Just offshore lies Bainivualiku, the Great Sea Reef. It is the third-largest barrier reef on the planet, yet somehow still one of its best-kept secrets. Stretching more than 200 kilometres, this is not the theme-park reef experience—no underwater highways of dive boats, no fish fed just for the 'socials. What you get is wild. Raw. Real. A marine ecosystem so healthy it brims with apex predators like reef sharks—nature's A-grade sign that the food chain here is intact.

Diving here is different. It's not just about the visibility (which is stellar), or the coral (which is vibrant), or the sea turtles, manta rays, and flickering reef fish (which are abundant). It's about who you dive with.

Nukubati Island - Image supplied

Clowns, lions and visitors



"Diving here is different. It's not just about the visibility (which is stellar), or the coral (which is vibrant), or the sea turtles, manta rays, and flickering reef fish (which are abundant). It's about who you dive with."

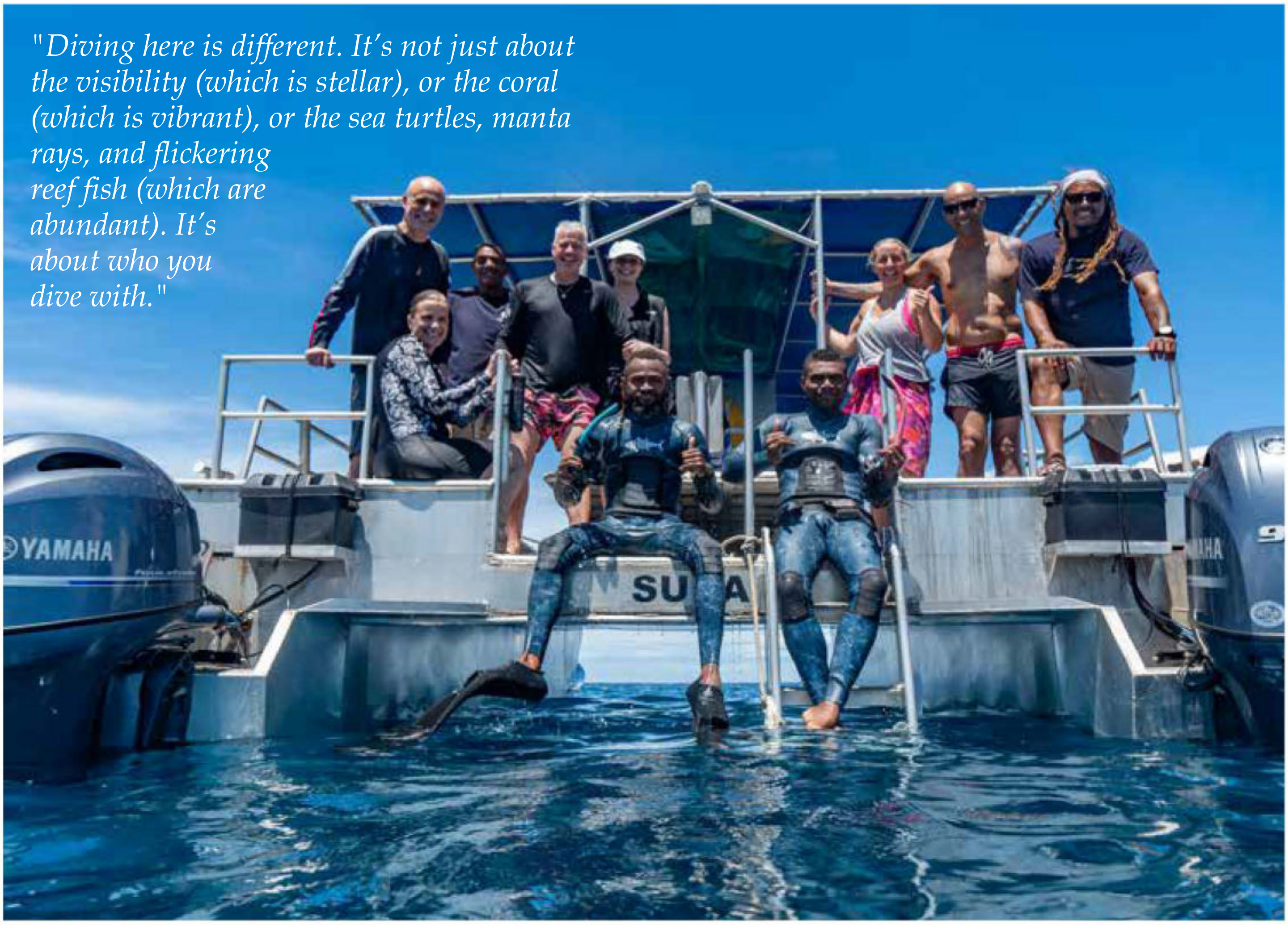


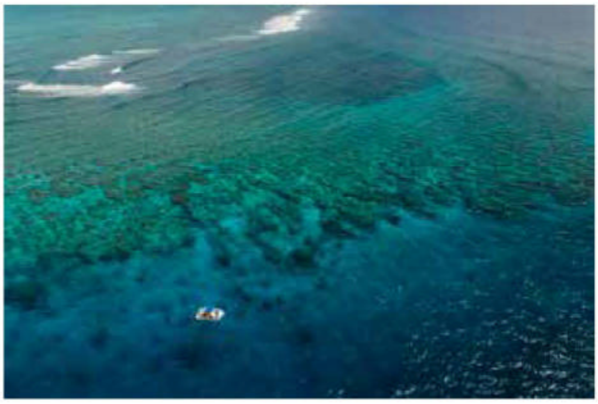
Image by Emilien Frarier

> *"Nukubati is a blueprint, a beacon, and a wild, wonderful argument that small can be mighty and paradise can have a purpose."*

The staff make you feel like family

Outside your bungalow

Dining together


The incredible reef

Meet Lara and Leone Vokai, the current managers of Nukubati (Lara is Jenny and Peter Bourke's daughter). They are a couple whose lives are in rhythm with Bainivualiku, the remote stretch of the Great Sea Reef in northern Fiji. Together, they've spent years decoding this untouched underwater frontier's tides, currents, and whispers. Their dive experience here is more than just a business—it's a gateway into a world that is still being charted, with new dive sites discovered regularly. "We've got about 20 favourites" (a few listed below), Lara says, "but we're still exploring." This is frontier diving with heart.

The dive business (GSR) runs two capable dive boats: a 12-seater twin-hull aluminium vessel with dual 90HP outboards for longer missions, and a smaller 4-seater twin-hull powered by twin 70HP engines—perfect for more agile, personal trips along the reef edge.

The gear? It's all top-drawer, with neatly maintained Apollo and Mares dive equipment available for hire. Whether you're a complete novice or a seasoned diver looking to level up, PADI certifications are on offer, too. Leone, a certified PADI Instructor and co-manager of nearby Nukubati Island, offers a full suite: Open Water, Advanced, Rescue, and Dive Master.

But what really sets this place apart isn't the logistics—it's the philosophy. Diving here isn't just an underwater thrill—it's a cultural immersion. The Vokais have woven marine education with storytelling, training local youth to become dive professionals and ambassadors for the reef. It's a rare kind of experience that blends ecological respect with Indigenous knowledge—where every dive is both an adventure and an act of conservation.
In Bainivualiku, the coral may dazzle and the marine life may astound—but it's the people, and their deep connection to this place, that will leave the lasting impression.

Back on land, the experience doesn't lose its magic. You won't find a buffet queue or a thumping poolside DJ. Instead, maybe a seafood feast cooked over hot stones at a tatavu beach barbecue, or a sandbar picnic where you're the only footprints. Fresh mahi mahi straight from the sea, mangoes from the island's own trees, herbs snipped from the garden by the chef. Everything feels handcrafted, thoughtful, grounded

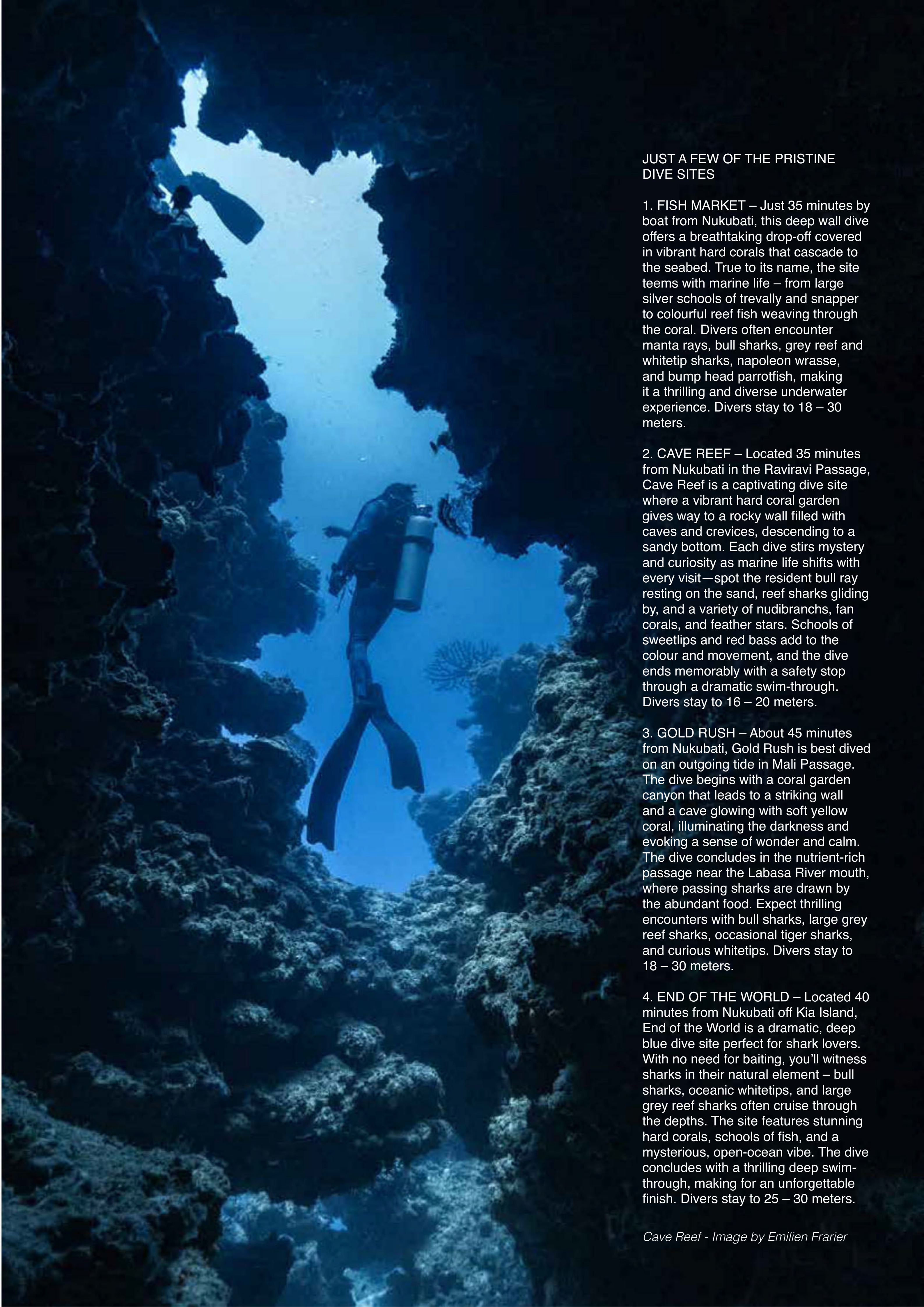
There are just seven beachfront bures, which means this isn't a resort that needs to entertain the masses. It caters to the few, the lucky, the seekers of something genuine. You might get a massage with the sound of waves lapping metres away, or kayak a lazy lagoon, or sit still with a good book and a better view.
And all the while, in the background, solar panels hum quietly, water is filtered cleanly, waste is handled responsibly. It's all seamless luxury without the guilt and indulgence where the only footprint is yours.

What's most impressive about Nukubati isn't what it has, but what it means. This is not a flashy eco-resort built to greenwash and impress. It's a functioning, thriving model of how tourism can regenerate rather than deplete. Of how leadership and community can fuse to create a place that's not just beautiful but ethical, enduring, and empowered.

When the time comes to leave—because it always does—you'll board one of the island's cheerful yellow boats. The staff will sing their goodbye, their harmonies carrying across the water like a promise: You'll be back. And you just might. Because once you've felt the pull of Nukubati, its reef, its people, and its quietly radical way of existing, the standard beach holiday won't cut it anymore.

Nukubati is a blueprint, a beacon, and a wild, wonderful argument that small can be mighty and paradise can have a purpose.

Thanks to Lara and Jenny and everyone at Nukubati
Phone: +679 6030919 I +679 2296360
E-mail: info@nukubati.com
www.nukubati.com



JUST A FEW OF THE PRISTINE DIVE SITES

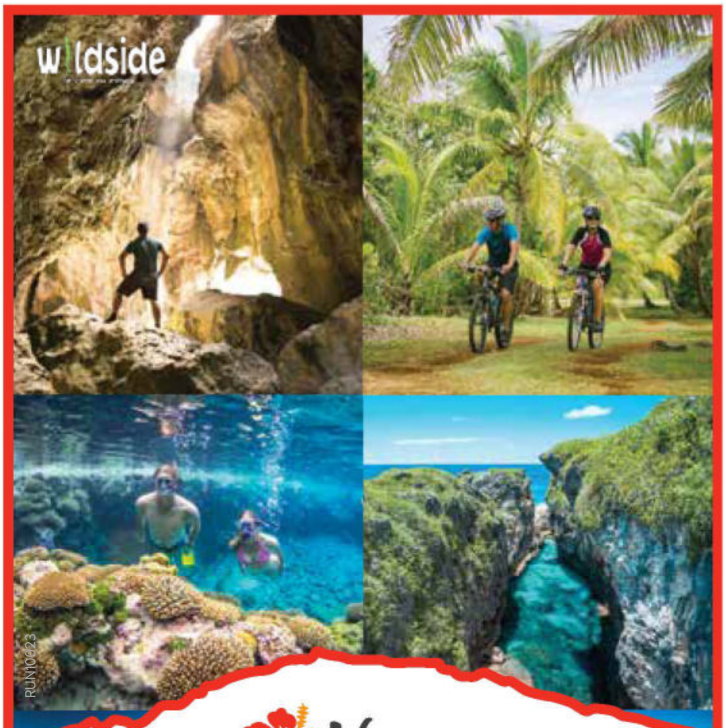
1. FISH MARKET – Just 35 minutes by boat from Nukubati, this deep wall dive offers a breathtaking drop-off covered in vibrant hard corals that cascade to the seabed. True to its name, the site teems with marine life – from large silver schools of trevally and snapper to colourful reef fish weaving through the coral. Divers often encounter manta rays, bull sharks, grey reef and whitetip sharks, napoleon wrasse, and bump head parrotfish, making it a thrilling and diverse underwater experience. Divers stay to 18 – 30 meters.

2. CAVE REEF – Located 35 minutes from Nukubati in the Raviravi Passage, Cave Reef is a captivating dive site where a vibrant hard coral garden gives way to a rocky wall filled with caves and crevices, descending to a sandy bottom. Each dive stirs mystery and curiosity as marine life shifts with every visit—spot the resident bull ray resting on the sand, reef sharks gliding by, and a variety of nudibranchs, fan corals, and feather stars. Schools of sweetlips and red bass add to the colour and movement, and the dive ends memorably with a safety stop through a dramatic swim-through. Divers stay to 16 – 20 meters.

3. GOLD RUSH – About 45 minutes from Nukubati, Gold Rush is best dived on an outgoing tide in Mali Passage. The dive begins with a coral garden canyon that leads to a striking wall and a cave glowing with soft yellow coral, illuminating the darkness and evoking a sense of wonder and calm. The dive concludes in the nutrient-rich passage near the Labasa River mouth, where passing sharks are drawn by the abundant food. Expect thrilling encounters with bull sharks, large grey reef sharks, occasional tiger sharks, and curious whitetips. Divers stay to 18 – 30 meters.

4. END OF THE WORLD – Located 40 minutes from Nukubati off Kia Island, End of the World is a dramatic, deep blue dive site perfect for shark lovers. With no need for baiting, you'll witness sharks in their natural element – bull sharks, oceanic whitetips, and large grey reef sharks often cruise through the depths. The site features stunning hard corals, schools of fish, and a mysterious, open-ocean vibe. The dive concludes with a thrilling deep swim-through, making for an unforgettable finish. Divers stay to 25 – 30 meters.

Cave Reef - Image by Emilien Frarier

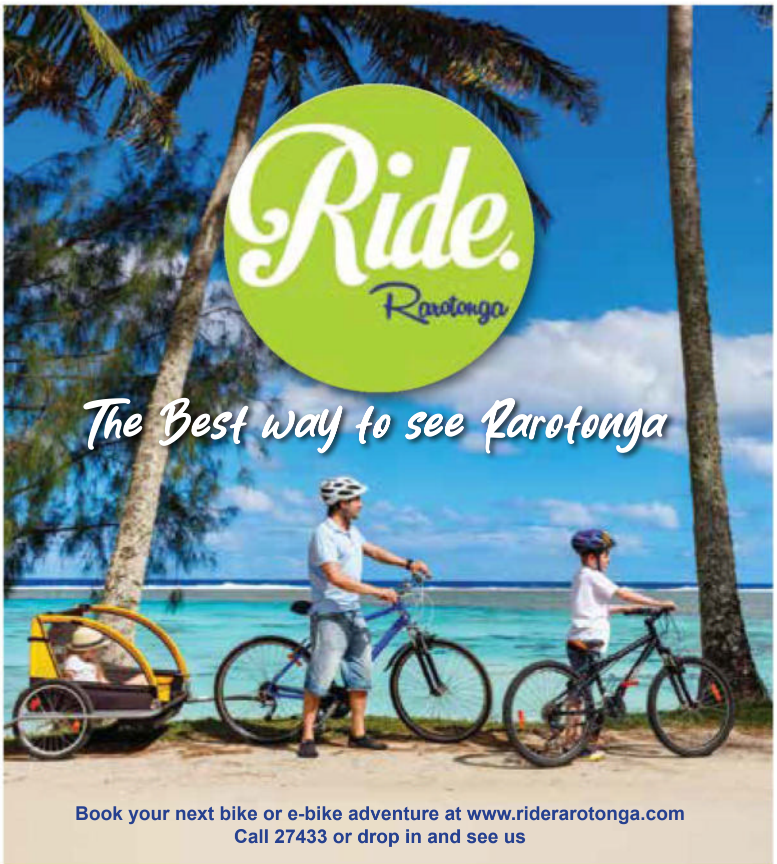


Niue

Nowhere like us

Arrive as a visitor and leave as a friend. No crime, no traffic and no queues. Relax or explore. Swim, fish and dive in the clearest waters in the pacific. The world's only Dark Sky Nation welcomes you to the way life used to be; the way life should be.

Contact: info@wildsidetravel.nz | 027 436 9025


Ride. Rarotonga
The Best way to see Rarotonga

Book your next bike or e-bike adventure at www.riderarotonga.com
Call 27433 or drop in and see us

Rarotonga's only dedicated Bike Shop | Bike delivery available | Sales + Servicing

In Avarua at the wharf end opposite the Punanga Nui Market

Drive Rarotonga www.driveraro.com

Rarotonga Laundromat www.rarotongalaundromat.com

www.rarotongabeachapartments.com

Eco Luxury on the Rainbow Reef Fiji
Book your Fiji Dive Adventure now!
-Dive-
-Indulge-
-Make a Difference-

VIANI BAY RESORT DIVE ACADEMY FIJI

* Boutique Eco-Luxury * Private Diving
* Artesenal Fijian Cuisine
* Conservation and Community Projects

www.vianibayresort.com | vianibayresort@diveacademyfiji.com

THE ALPINE CENTRE

Sharing their passion for having fun on the snow!
Skibiz @ The Alpine Centre, National Park

SNOWZONE
THE ALPINE CENTRE
SKI BIZ

- Expert advice and service
- Ski & Snowboard hire
- Ski & Board tuning
- E-bike hire
- Shop online

ebikes now available
The Alpine Centre, providing friendly helpful service so you have the best possible, memorable snow experience

National Park Village, Mt Ruapehu
Ph: 07 8922717 **www.thealpinecentre.co.nz**

THE OLD POST OFFICE LODGE

Located in the heart of the Ruapehu District
The outdoors capital of the North Island!

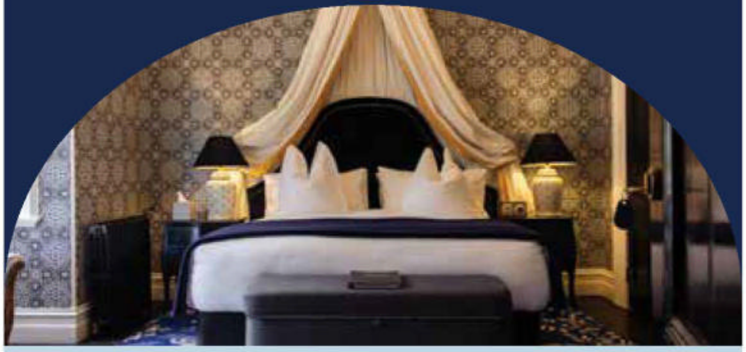
Gorgeous unique bespoke historic Vacation Home:
Accommodates 2-18 guests in up to seven bedrooms

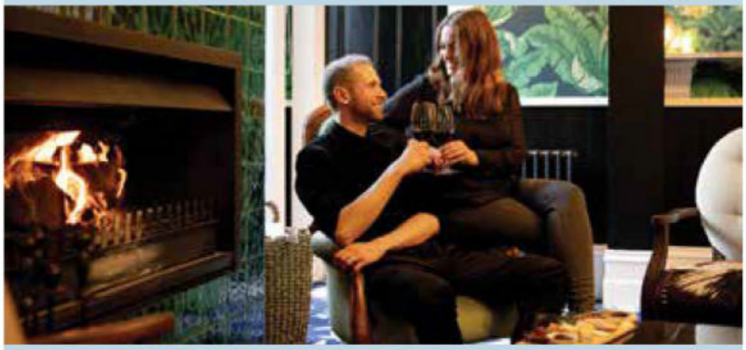
Centrally located to: '42 Traverse' ends at our doorstep
Tongariro Alpine Crossing
Pureora Timber Trail
The mighty Whanganui River
The Forgotten Highway (& Bridge to Nowhere)
30Mins to Whakapapa & 60mins to Turoa
Plus central to numerous other treks and trails
(& Waitomo GlowWorm Caves en route from Auckland)

www.TheOldPostOfficeLodge.co.nz

HULBERT HOUSE
BOUTIQUE HOTEL

Indulge in winter luxury

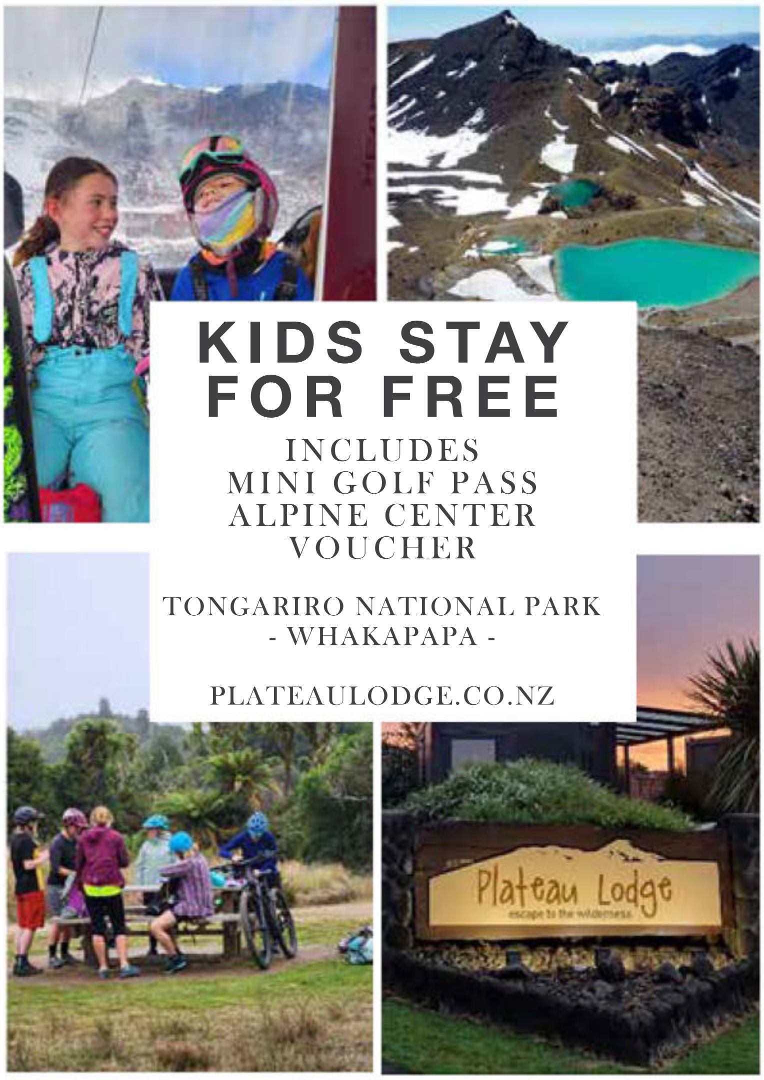




Winter offer: Stay 3 nights & save 20%*

68 Ballarat Street, Queenstown
hulberthouse.co.nz

*Conditions apply



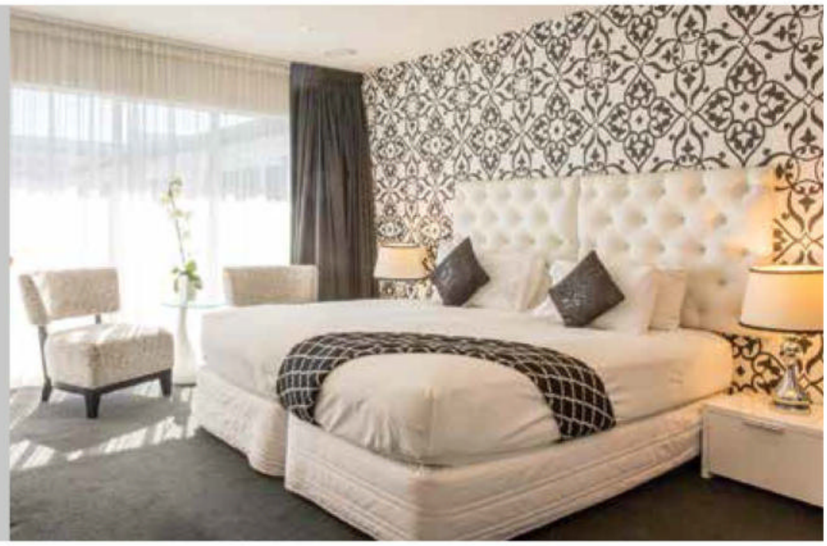
KIDS STAY FOR FREE
INCLUDES
MINI GOLF PASS
ALPINE CENTER
VOUCHER

TONGARIRO NATIONAL PARK
- WHAKAPAPA -

PLATEAULODGE.CO.NZ

REGENT
OF ROTORUA

“Escape ordinary”



Caring luxury | Local flavour | One of a kind
Mountain bike clean up area and a secure mountain bike storage area available

1191 Pukaki Street, Rotorua
p: +64 7 348 4079 | w: regentrotorua.co.nz

SMALL PLANET QUEENSTOWN

THE ORIGINAL SKI & BACKCOUNTRY STORE

Passion, expertise and great equipment, since 1984.

SMALLPLANETSPORTS.COM FREERIDE - TOURING - PISTE - SNOW SAFETY - BOOT FITTING - DEMOS

SAS
SOUTH AUCKLAND SHUTTLES

S.A Shuttles are a specialists when it comes to Auckland Airport shuttle services. We pick-up passengers from the Airport and deliver to; hotels, motels, CBD and the suburbs (door to door). This service is available to meet every flight arriving into Auckland Airport.

- BOOKED shuttle services to meet flight
- On demand shuttle services for group bookings
- Direct shuttle for individual needs
- Corporate Transfers for Business Client

We also do tours around the North Island | www.southaucklandshuttles.com | bookings@sashuttles.com | 0800 300 033 (Toll free)

ADVENTURE MAGAZINE
ONE TREE PLANTED
·PLANT ONE TREE·
Scan Me

Subscribe Today, Save Tomorrow

For every subscription to Adventure Magazine, we'll have a native tree planted right here in New Zealand.

SUPPSNZ
CREATINE
100% Quality Ingredients
100% Moneyback Guarantee
Fast and Discreet Shipping
Secured Shopping
Made in New Zealand

Support muscle growth and strength, with our high purity Creatine.

SHOP NOW

www.supps.nz | 0800 773 766

Walk, bike, stay...
ON THE TRACK LODGE
NYDIA TRACK ACCOMMODATION

"Discover the hidden wonders of the Nydia Track."

All inclusive package from $535 per person (share twin)

Package includes: • Track transfers •Coffee and cake on arrival at On the Track Lodge • 2 nights in comfortable chalet accommodation* • All meals (Day 1 dinner & dessert, Day 2 breakfast, packed lunch & dinner & dessert, Day 3 breakfast & packed lunch) • Use of On the Track Lodge kayaks and all other amenities, including a hot-tub. *Upgrade to stay in the newly renovated vintage train carriages (with private bathroom).

On The Track Lodge, Nydia Track, Marlborough Sounds
+643 579 8411 | stay@onthetracklodge.nz | www.onthetracklodge.nz

BYD SHARK 6
Top of the Food Chain.

new zealand autocar
2024
CAR OF THE YEAR
BYD SHARK 6

SHARK 6

Experience the future of driving with the BYD SHARK 6, a cutting-edge plug-in hybrid that blends raw power with unmatched efficiency. Equipped with Super Hybrid technology, the BYD SHARK 6 seamlessly combines a 1.5-liter turbocharged engine and two electric motors for a thrilling driving experience.

bydauto.co.nz